Esoteric Observations of Karmic Relationships

In 6 Volumes
Volume 6

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Karmic Relationships, VI: Lecture I

For his present life on Earth man is beholden partly to the external world, including in the wider sense not only the several kingdoms of Nature immediately around him but also the influences coming from the stars and the cosmic expanse. But this is only one part of the world to which he is beholden for his present earthly life. He is beholden above all to his previous lives on Earth, the results and effects of which he brings with him inwardly. As you know from anthroposophical literature, man is a fourfold being. Every time he goes to sleep his astral body and 'I' separate from his physical and etheric bodies. Of these members only the physical and etheric bodies owe their character and composition to the external world lying visibly — or also, as etheric world, invisibly — around man. On the other hand, everything that he bears within him in his astral body and Ego in his present earthly existence, he owes entirely to what he experienced in the past, in earlier lives on Earth.

In the outer physical world there are two portals, two gates, through which the life of man, taken in its entirety, reaches out beyond this world. We will begin to-day by considering this cosmic aspect and conclude

with a study very directly concerned with human life. For inhabitants of the Earth, these two gates are the Moon and the Sun.

The fact is that modern science knows very little indeed about the heavenly bodies — actually only what can be determined by calculation or observed by means of instruments. Just think what an inhabitant of Mars would know about the Earth if, from Mars or from some other star, he were to acquire his knowledge by employing the same methods as those employed by the inhabitants of the Earth! He would know no more than that the Earth is a luminous body radiating into cosmic space the light it reflects from the Sun. He might form all kinds of hypotheses, just as men do about Mars — as to whether beings do or do not exist on the Earth. But an inhabitant of the Earth knows that beings of his own rank and beings of other kingdoms share his dwelling-place; and those whose knowledge is derived from the inner, spiritual destinies of earthly humanity, will be able to reach a deeper understanding of the significance of the other heavenly bodies, for example, of the Sun and the Moon.

Let us think about what may be said of this physical, psychic and spiritual aspect of Moon existence. I must

here remind you of many things to be found in the book *Occult Science — an Outline*, and in several of the printed lecture-courses. From this literature you know that the Moon was once united with the Earth. It is accepted by orthodox modern science, at any rate by its most important representatives, that the physical Moon once separated from the Earth and, if I may put it so, chose its own position in cosmic space.

But Spiritual Science discloses that not only did the physical Moon separate from the Earth but that certain Beings went with it, Beings who had once inhabited the Earth together with men. They were of a much higher spiritual rank than man in his physical embodiment; but they were in close intercourse with men, although this intercourse was altogether different from the relationships between human beings to-day.

Anyone who devotes even cursory study to the early history of the Earth and its spiritual achievements will feel deep reverence for the different civilisations. Certainly, our forefathers — that is to say, we ourselves in earlier incarnations — were not as ‘clever’ in the modern sense as we imagine ourselves to be to-day, but in point of fact they knew a great deal more. Knowledge, after all, is not acquired through

cleverness only. Cleverness comes from intellect, and intellect is only one of the human faculties, although nowadays it is prized, especially by science, more highly than all the others. Yet when we see how the world has developed in a moral and social respect in this enlightened twentieth century, there is really no cause to be so very proud of our intellectual culture — which has come into being only in the course of time. Even if with no other aid than external history we go back and consider, for example, what originates from the ancient East, we cannot but feel great reverence. The same may apply even to certain achievements of so-called ‘uncivilised’ peoples, but we will think now only of ancient India and Persia, of the wonderful wisdom contained in the Vedas, in Vedanta or Yoga philosophy. If we let these things work upon us, not superficially but with all their deep intensity we shall feel an ever-increasing reverence for what past ages created — not through cleverness as we know it, but in a quite different way.

Spiritual Science makes it clear that what has been preserved in documentary records is only the residue of a wonderful, primeval wisdom of mankind. It was expressed in a much more poetic, artistic language than is used for our modern knowledge, but it was nevertheless wonderful wisdom, imparted to men by

Beings at a stage of evolution far higher than that of humanity on Earth. Intellectual thinking takes place, after all, through the instrumentality of the physical body, and these Beings had no physical body. This accounts for the fact that they conveyed their primordial wisdom to mankind in an essentially poetic, artistic form.

These Beings did not remain with the Earth; the majority of them to-day actually inhabit the Moon in the heavens. What modern science can discover has to do only with the external properties of the Moon. The Moon is in truth the home of lofty spiritual Beings whose task once was to inspire earthly humanity with the primeval wisdom. They then withdrew to establish this Moon colony in the Cosmos. It is clear from what I have said about these Beings who now inhabit the Moon that our own human past is connected with them. In earlier lives we were their terrestrial companions. And our connection with them is immediately evident if we look beyond what external knowledge and external life can give to man. When we contemplate all the factors by which our existence is determined, which are not, however, dependent upon our intellect but transcend the intellect and are related to our deeper nature, we realise that these Moon Beings, although they no longer have their

habitation on the Earth, are still deeply and inwardly connected with our very existence. For before descending to the Earth and receiving a physical body from our forefathers, we were in the spiritual world, in pre-earthly life; and there, even to-day, we are in close contact with these Beings who were our companions in Earth existence long ages ago. When we come down from the spiritual worlds into earthly existence, we pass through the Moon sphere, through the Moon existence. Once upon a time, when these Moon Beings were on the Earth, they had a profound effect upon mankind, and it is still so to-day, inasmuch as they impress into the descending Ego and astral body what is then carried over into the physical body on Earth.

Nobody can himself decide to be a man of talent, or a genius, or even a good man. Yet there are men of talent and genius and some who are innately good. These are qualities which the intellect cannot produce; they are connected with man’s inmost nature, a great part of which comes with him when he passes from pre-earthly existence through birth into earthly life. To impress into his Ego and astral body what then makes its way into his nerves and blood as genius or talent or the will to do good or evil — this is the task of the Moon Beings during the time when in a man’s pre-earthly existence he is passing through the

Moon sphere. It is not only when, in poetic mood, lovers go walking in the moonlight that the Moon has an effect upon what is living and weaving in the deeper part of man's nature below the level of consciousness; this Moon influence is active in everything that rises from a level below that of the conscious intellect and makes man what he really is in earthly life. And so to-day these Moon Beings are still connected with our past, inasmuch as it is they who after our earlier incarnations give us in pre-earthly existence the stamp of individuality.

If we look back over our life to the point where it runs out beyond the earthly realm into the spiritual, whence our particular faculties, our temperament, our inmost, essential character, are derived, we find in the *Moon* the one gate which leads from the physical into the spiritual world. It is the gate through which the *past* makes its way into our life and gives us *individuality*.

The other gate is the *Sun*. We do not owe our individuality to the Sun. The Sun shines alike on the good and on the evil, on men of genius and on fools. As far as earthly life is concerned the Sun has no *direct* connection with our individuality. In one instance only has the Sun established connection with

earthly individuality and this was possible because at a certain point of time in the Earth’s evolution, a sublime Sun Being, the Christ, did not remain on the Sun but came down from the Sun to the Earth and became a Being of the Earth in the body of a man, thus uniting His own cosmic destiny with the destiny of earthly humanity. The other Sun Beings who remained in the Sun sphere have no access to the single human individuality but only to what is common to all mankind. Something of this remained in the Christ and is an infinite blessing for earthly humanity: what had remained in Him was and is that His power knows no differentiation among men. Christ is not the Christ of this or that nation, of this or that rank or class. He is the Christ for all men, without distinction of class, race or nation. Nor is He the Christ of particular individualities, inasmuch as His help is available alike to the genius and the fool. The Christ Impulse has access to the individuality of man, but to become effective it must take effect in the inmost depths of human nature. It is not the forces of the intellect but the deepest forces of the heart and soul which can receive the Christ Impulse; but once received this Impulse works not for the benefit of the individual-human but of the universal-human. This is because Christ is a Sun Being.

Looking back into the past we feel ourselves connected with the Moon existence and realise that we bear within us something not derived from the present but from the cosmic past — not merely from the earthly past. In our present Earth existence we unite this fragment of the past with the present. We do not, in the ordinary way, pay much attention to what is contained in this fragment of the past; but in point of fact we should not be of much account as human beings if it were not there within us. What we acquire at the time of descending from pre-earthly into earthly existence has something automatic about it — the automatic element in our physical and etheric bodies. What makes us into particular human individuals is inwardly connected with our past and thus with the Moon existence. But just as we are connected with the past through our Moon existence, so are we connected with our *future* through the Sun existence. We were ready for the Moon forces, especially in relation to the Beings who have withdrawn to the Moon, even in earlier times; for the Sun which works to-day as an impulse in the sphere of the universal-human only, we shall not be ready until a very distant future, when evolution has reached a much more advanced stage. The Sun to-day can reach only to our external being; not until distant future ages will it be able to reach our individuality, the inmost core of our being. When the

Earth is no longer Earth, when it has passed into quite another metamorphosis, then and then only shall we be ready for the Sun existence. Man is so proud of his intellect — but the intellect in present humanity is purely a product of the Earth, since it is tied to the brain, and the brain — despite current belief — is the most physical structure in the human organism.

The Sun is perpetually wresting us away from this bondage to the earthly, for the Sun does not in reality work upon our brain … if it did, we should produce much cleverer thoughts! From the physical aspect the Sun's influence is exerted on the *heart*, and what streams out from the heart is Sun-activity. Through the brain men are essentially egotistic, through the heart they become free from egoism and rise to the level of the universal-human. Thus through the Sun we are more than we should be if we were left to our own resources in our present Earth existence. Let me put it like this: if we can really find our way to the Christ, He enables us, because He is a Sun Being, to be more than we could otherwise be.

The Sun stands in the heavens personifying the future, whereas the Moon personifies the past. The Sun is the other gate into the spiritual world, the gate leading to the future. Just as we are impelled into

earthly existence by the Moon Beings and Moon forces, so, through death, we are impelled out of it by the Sun forces. These Sun forces are connected with that part of our nature of which we are not yet master, which the gods have given us so that we may not wilt in earthly life but reach out beyond our own limitations. And so Moon and Sun are in truth the two gates in the universe into the spiritual life. The Moon is inhabited by Beings with whom we were once connected in the way I have indicated. The Sun is inhabited by Beings with whom — with the exception of the Christ — we shall be united only in our future cosmic existence. The Christ will lead us to those who were once His companions on the Sun. But this, as far as man is concerned, belongs to the future.

We have said that the influences of the Moon work upon us from the spiritual world; the same is true of the influences working from the Sun upon our physical and etheric bodies. Think, for example, of the *temperaments*. There are forces in the temperaments which play into the physical body, but more particularly into the etheric body. This is regulated by the interplay of Sun and Moon. A man with a strong vein of melancholy in his temperament is strongly influenced by the Moon. Similarly, a man with a markedly sanguine vein in his temperament is

strongly influenced by the Sun. A man in whom the quality of Sun and Moon are in balance and neutralised, will be a phlegmatic type. When the physical element as such plays into a man and comes to expression in the life of soul, as in the temperaments, the Sun and Moon forces are in play in the whole of his being. But to begin with, man is aware of these forces only when they confront him in their external, physical manifestation, when the Moon — and similarly the Sun — announces its presence through the orb that is outwardly visible. Yet forces far transcending the physical are taking effect; we must always speak of the Sun and Moon as *spiritual* realities. And that is easy enough to realise.

Think of a human body. This body to-day no longer has within it the same substances as it had ten years ago. You are perpetually casting off these physical substances and replacing them by new. What endures is the *spiritual* form of man, the configuration of inner forces. Suppose you had been sitting in this room ten years ago; you do not bring with you now the flesh and blood that were within you then as material substance. The physical is involved in a perpetual stream from within outwards; it is being cast off all the time. Although this is a known fact it is not always remembered. It is a fact in the Cosmos too. People

think that the Moon which shines down upon the Earth to-day is the same Moon which shone upon Caesar or Alcibiades or Buddha. Spiritually, yes, it is the same Moon, but not in respect of physical substance. As for the Sun, the physicists and astrophysicists calculate how long it will be before it disintegrates in cosmic space. They know that it will disintegrate but they reckon in terms of millions of years. The same kind of results would be obtained if such calculations were applied to the human being. The calculations are absolutely correct and cannot be faulted — only they are not *true*! They are dead correct, but just think of this — if you examined a human heart today, then five days later and then again after a further five days, you could calculate from the minute changes what it was like three hundred years ago and what it will be like three hundred years hence. In the same way geology can calculate what the Earth looked like twenty million years ago and what it will look like twenty million years hence. The calculations may be perfectly correct, but the Earth was not in existence twenty million years ago and will not be in existence twenty million years from now. The calculations themselves are correct but they are not true! Not even for the shortest periods does the Cosmos differ from man in this respect. Although mineral substances last essentially longer in that form than the configuration

of substance in living bodies, yet even the purely physical part of mineral substances is transient. As I have said, the Moon in the sky to-day is in its physical composition no longer the same Moon which shone upon Caesar or Alcibiades or the Emperor Augustus, for its substance has changed, just as the substance of a man's physical body has changed. What endures out there in the Cosmos is the spiritual element, just as in the case of a human being what endures from birth to death is the *spiritual entity*, not the physical substance.

We shall therefore only be viewing the world rightly when we say of man that what endures between birth and death is his soul; what endures out yonder in the celestial bodies is a multiplicity of Beings. And when speaking of Moon and Sun we ought to be conscious that if we are to speak truly we must speak of Beings of the Moon and Beings of the Sun. The Beings of the Moon are connected with our past; the Beings of the Sun will be connected with our future, but even now they work into our present existence.

A sound basis for the study of human karma and destiny can be established only when man is given his real place within the Cosmos.

Try as we will, we can never alter the past. For this reason, in the Moon forces as they work into and lay hold of our human nature there is an element of immutable *necessity*. Everything that comes to us from the Moon has this character. In whatever comes from the Sun and points to the future, there is something in which our will, our *freedom*, can be a factor. So that we can say: when man again apprehends the Divine in the Cosmos, and instead of vague, sentimental generalisations is able to speak with precision and definition about the Divine as revealed in the several heavenly bodies, a special kind of language will take shape within him when he contemplates the heavenly bodies with heart-knowledge and true human understanding.

Now suppose a human being were standing in front of us and looking at his hands or his arms, his head, his chest, his legs, his feet, we were to ask in each case, ‘what is that?,’ and were told in reply, ‘that is something human.’ When no distinctions are made but everything is labelled with the generalisation ‘human,’ we are without bearings or direction. The same is true if we gaze out into the Cosmos, contemplate the Sun and Moon and the stars and speak of the Divine as a generalisation. We must acquire a definite, concretely real view of the Divine.

And this we do when we recognise, for example, the deep connection of the Moon with our own past, indeed with the past of the whole Earth. Then, when we look at the Moon in the heavens, we can say: “Thou cosmic offspring of Necessity, when I contemplate that within me over which my will has no sway, I feel inwardly united with thee.” Our knowledge of the Moon then becomes *feeling*, for we realise that every experience arising perceptibly out of inner necessity is connected with the Moon.

If in the same way we contemplate the inmost nature of the Sun, not merely making calculations or observing it through instruments, we shall feel its kinship with everything that lives in us as freedom, with everything that we ourselves can achieve for the benefit of the future.

Such experiences would enable us to find a link with the instinctive wisdom of primeval humanity. For we cannot rightly understand what radiates with such poetic beauty from ancient civilisations unless we can still feel, when we gaze at the Moon, that there we are glimpsing the past with its element of necessity and when we gaze at the Sun that there we are glimpsing the freedom belonging to the future.

Necessity and freedom interweave in our destiny. In terms of the terrestrial and human we speak of Necessity and Freedom; in terms of the heavenly and cosmic we speak of Moon existence and Sun existence.

Now let us try to discover how the forces of the Sun and Moon work in the web of our destiny. We meet some human being. As a rule the fact that we have met him is enough in itself; we accept life as it comes without being very observant or giving it much thought. But deeper scrutiny of individual human life reveals that when two persons meet, their paths have been guided in a remarkable way. Think of two individuals, one aged twenty-five and the other aged twenty, who meet; they can look back over the course of their lives hitherto and it will be evident to each of them that every single happening in the life of the one, say the twenty-year-old, had impelled him from quite a different part of the world to this meeting, at this particular place, with the other. The same will be true of the twenty-five-year-old. In the forming of destiny very much depends upon the fact that human beings, starting from different parts of the world, meet as though guided by an iron necessity directly to the meeting-point. No thought is given to the wonders that can be revealed by studies of this kind but human

life is infinitely enriched by insight into such situations and impoverished without it. If we begin to think about our relationship to some human being whom we seem to have met quite by accident, we shall have to say to ourselves that we had been looking for him, seeking for him, ever since we were born into this earthly existence … and as a matter of fact, even before then. But I do not want to go into that at the moment. We need only remind ourselves that we should not have come across this individual if at some earlier point in earthly life we had taken only a slightly different direction to the left or to the right and had not gone the way we did. As I said, people do not give any thought to these matters. But it is sheer arrogance to believe that something to which one pays no attention is non-existent. It is a fact and will eventually reveal itself to observation. There is, however, a significant difference between what takes place before the actual meeting of two individuals and what takes place from that moment onwards. Before they met in earthly life, they had influenced each other without having any knowledge of the other's existence. After the meeting the mutual influence continues, but now they know each other. And this again is the beginning of something extremely significant.

Naturally, we also meet many individuals in life for whom we have not been seeking. I will not say that we meet a great many people of whom we might think that it would have been better not to have done so! I am not suggesting any such thing … but at all events we do meet many individuals of whom we cannot say that we have deliberately set out to find them.

If what I have now been saying is viewed in the light of Spiritual Science, it becomes clear that what has been in operation between two human beings *before* they actually meet in earthly life is determined by the Moon, whereas everything that takes place between them *after* their meeting is determined by the Sun. Hence what occurs between two human beings before they become acquainted can only be regarded as the outcome of iron necessity and what happens afterwards as the expression of freedom, of mutually free relationship and behaviour. It is indeed true that when we get to know a human being our soul subconsciously looks back and forward: back to the spiritual Moon, forward to the spiritual Sun. And with this is connected the weaving of our karma, our destiny.

Very few people today have faculties for perceiving these things. But it is precisely because these faculties

are beginning to develop that so much in our age is in a state of ferment. The faculties are already present in numbers of human beings, only they are unaware of it and ascribe the effects to all kinds of other causes. In reality these faculties of perception are striving to function so that when human beings become acquainted with one another they may realise how much is due to iron necessity, to the forces of the Moon, and how their relationship will go forward in the light of the Sun, in the light of freedom. To experience destiny in this way is itself part of the cosmic destiny of humanity today and on into the future. When we meet a human being in the world we can distinguish quite clearly between two kinds of relationship. In the case of one individual the relationship proceeds from the *will*, in the case of another, it proceeds more or less from the *intellect*, or even from the aesthetic sense.

Think of the subtle differences in the relationships between human beings even in childhood or youth. We may love an individual or perhaps we hate him. If our feelings do not reach this intensity, we shall feel sympathy or antipathy; our feelings in this case do not go very deep — we just pass him by or let him pass us by. It cannot be denied that this was how we felt about

most of our teachers at school; and we should count ourselves fortunate if it was not so.

But a quite different kind of relationship is possible, even in childhood. It is when we are so inwardly affected by what we see a person do, that we say: we must do it too! The relationship between us makes us choose him as a hero, as one we must follow on the path to Olympus. In short, some human beings have an effect upon our intellect, or at best upon our aesthetic sympathy or antipathy; and others have a direct effect upon our will.

Or think of the other side of life. External circumstances may bring us into very close contact with certain individuals — yet we simply cannot dream about them. We may meet others only once, yet we never seem to be free of them, we are always dreaming about them. If a more intimate association is not vouchsafed to us in this present earthly life, this will have to be reserved for other incarnations. However that may be, our relationship to a human being is deeper if, as soon as we meet him, we begin to dream about him.

There is also a sort of *waking dreaming*, which in the case of most people to-day lacks clear definition. But

as you know, there are also initiated human beings who experience life very differently. If we meet an individual who makes an impression upon our will, he will also have an effect upon our ‘inner speech:’ he will not only speak when he is face to face with us; he will also speak out of us. If we are initiated into the secret of cosmic existence we shall know that there is a double relationship between individuals when they meet: we may meet one person to whom we shall listen, and then go on our way; we need never listen to him any more. Others we may meet to whom we shall listen, but when we go away from them they still seem to be speaking — but out of our own inner being: they are there and they really do seem to speak in this way.

What happens in the case of an Initiate is as I have just described: he actually carries within him, in the very quality of his voice, those who have made this impression on him. In those who are not initiated this also takes place, but only in the realm of feeling; it is there all the same, but subconsciously. Let us suppose that we meet an individual and then come across other people who know him as well and will remark what a splendid fellow he is. This means that they have thought about the man and have formed a judgement based on the intellect. But we do not call

everyone we meet a splendid fellow or a cad, as the case may be; there are individuals who have an effect upon our will — which as I have said, leads a kind of sleeping existence within us during our waking life. The effect is that we feel we simply must follow or oppose them. In one who is not initiated, these individuals, even if they do not speak within him, live in his will. What then exactly is the difference between these two kinds of relationship?

When we meet other human beings who have no effect upon our will, but of whom we do no more than form a judgement, then there is no strong karmic connection between us; we have had little to do with them in earlier earthly lives. Individuals who affect our very will, so that they seem to be always with us, whose form is so strongly impressed upon us that they are always in our thoughts, so that we dream of them even in our waking life — these are the individuals with whom we have had a great deal to do in our past earthly lives, with whom we are as it were cosmically connected through the gate of the Moon; whereas in our present life we are connected through the Sun with everything that lives in us without any element of the necessity belonging to Moon existence.

Thus is destiny woven. On the one side man has his isolated ‘head-existence’ which has considerable independence. Even physically this head-existence raises itself all the time above the general conditions of man’s cosmic existence, and in the following way — the brain weighs on average 1,500 grammes, and with this weight it would crush all the underlying blood vessels. Just think of it — a weight of 1,500 grammes pressing on those delicate blood vessels! But this does not happen. Why not? Simply because the brain is embedded in the cerebral fluid. If you have learnt any physics, you will know that a body in water loses as much of its weight as the weight of the volume of water it displaces — this is the so-called principle of Archimedes. The actual weight of the brain is therefore about 20 grammes, because the brain floats in the cerebral fluid. Hence the brain in the body presses with a weight of only 20 grammes — certainly not with its actual weight of 1,500 grammes. The brain is isolated and has its own existence.

As we go about the world, the brain is like a man sitting in his motor-car. The man himself does not move; the car moves and he sits still. And our brain as the bearer of intellect has an isolated existence. That is why the intellect is so independent of our individuality. If each of us had our own separate and

distinct intellect this would augur badly for any mutual understanding! We are able to understand one another only because we all possess the same principle of intellect, although naturally there are differences of degree. But intellect is a universal principle. Human beings can understand one another through the intellect which is independent of their individual qualities. Whatever appears in human destiny as something belonging to the immediate *Present* — such as the meeting of two people — works upon the intellect and impulses of feeling associated with the intellect. In these cases we speak of someone as a ‘splendid fellow’ in whom we have no further interest than that he has had an effect upon our intellect. Everything that is not part of our karma has an effect upon the intellect; everything that is part of our karma and links us with other human beings as a result of experiences once shared with the individuals we now meet — all this works through those depths of human nature which lie in the will. And so it is true that the will is working even before we actually meet a human being with whom we are karmically connected. The will is not always illumined by the intellect. Just think how much in the working of the will is shrouded in darkness! The karma which leads two human beings together is shrouded in the deepest obscurity of all; they become dimly aware that karma is working from

the way in which their wills are involved. The moment they come face to face the intellect begins to work; and what is then woven by the intellect can become the basis for future karma. But in essentials — not wholly, but in essentials — it would be true to say that for two human beings who are karmically connected, their karma has worked itself out when the meeting has taken place. Only what they may do after that as a continuation of what lives in the unconscious — that and that alone becomes part of the stream of future karma. But a great deal is then woven into their destiny which has an effect only on the intellect and its sympathies and antipathies. Past and Future, Moon existence and Sun existence are here intermingled. The thread of karma that reaches into the past is interwoven with the thread that reaches into the future.

We can actually gaze into cosmic existence. For if we watch the Sun rising in the morning and look at the Moon at night, we can glimpse in their mutual relationships a picture of how Necessity and Freedom are interwoven in our own destiny. And if, with a concrete idea of the mingling of Necessity and Freedom in human destiny, we again contemplate the Sun and the Moon, they will begin to unveil their spirituality to us. Then we shall not speak like the

unwitting physicists who when they look at the Moon merely say that it reflects the light of the Sun … but when we see this light of the Moon which is the same as the light of the Sun, we shall rather speak of the weaving of cosmic destiny.

Thus contemplation of our own human destiny leads to a conception of *cosmic destiny*. Then and only then are we able in the real sense to knit our human existence with cosmic existence. Man must learn to feel himself a living member of the Cosmos. Just as a finger is a finger only while it is actually part of a human body — if it is amputated it is no longer really a finger — so man himself has real being only inasmuch as he is part of the Cosmos. But man is arrogant, and the finger would probably be humbler if it had the same kind of consciousness. … Yet perhaps it would no longer be humble if it could at any moment tear itself free and move around the body… although it would have to remain in the sphere of a human being in order to remain a finger at all! And man, as earthly man, must remain in the Earth-sphere if he is to be man. He is a quite different being, he is a being of eternity when he is outside the Earth-sphere, either in pre-earthly or post-earthly existence. But again, we can gain knowledge of these spheres of existence only when we recognise that we ourselves

are members of the Universe. This recognition will never be achieved by fanciful speculation about our connection with the Universe, but only when, as we have tried to do to-day, we learn gradually to feel its concrete reality. Then we feel that our destiny is in very truth an image of the world of stars, of the Sun-nature and the Moon-nature. We learn to look out into the Universe and read the scroll of our human life from the life of the great Universe. Again, we learn to look into our own soul and to understand the world through it. For nobody understands the Moon who does not understand the element of Necessity in human destiny; nobody understands the Sun who does not understand the element of Freedom in human nature. Such are the interconnections of Necessity and Freedom.

At the Christmas Foundation Meeting at the Goetheanum we tried to give the impulses which would help us to make these facts of true esoteric perception still more effective in the years to come. And I hope that our Members will become more and more conscious of what took place at Christmas. I would like particularly to draw your attention to the fact that every Member can now receive the News Sheet. Through this News Sheet and many other developments in the Anthroposophical Society, the

whole Society should in future be able to share in that quickening life which can flow from Anthroposophy. The isolation which has hitherto existed between the Groups must as far as possible come to an end. The Anthroposophical Society can become a real whole only when those who are members of a Group in New Zealand know what is going on in a Group in Berne, and members of a Berne Group know what is going on in New Zealand or New York or Vienna. This should now be possible. And one of the many things we are doing, or at least that we want to do in connection with the Christmas Meeting is to make this News Sheet a medium for all anthroposophical work in the world. It will be necessary to pay some attention to the News Sheet, and then everyone will realise what he can do to promote its aims.

While I am speaking here the third number of the News Sheet is being issued in Dornach; in it I have shown how every Member can co-operate in making it a genuine reflection of anthroposophical achievements. Only because I believe that to this end it is necessary for Anthroposophy to be cultivated more intensively within the Society — I do not mean in the sense of more content, but with greater intensity, greater enthusiasm, greater love — only for these reasons, although in the ordinary way I should have

every right at my age, to retire, I have decided, after having given up the personal leadership of the Society in 1912, to begin again and to imagine that I have regained my youth and am capable of the work. I want this to be understood as a desire to stimulate interest for a more active life in the Anthroposophical Society. My hope — and anyone who was not at Dornach can read about it in the Goetheanum Weekly and the News Sheet — is that whatever of spiritual value was achieved at the Christmas Meeting shall in some way reach every individual Member. Thereby the aim of bringing true esoteric life into the Society will be achieved. The High School for Spiritual Science was founded at Christmas with the aim that esoteric life shall again flow into the Anthroposophical Society.

I hope that the words I have spoken to you to-day will have expressed the desire that this esoteric life may again unfold among us in the way that will be made clearer and clearer to you. This aim can become reality through what can go out in future from Dornach as the centre where the General Anthroposophical Society was founded at Christmas. May the Members of this Berne Group be able to contribute effectively to what we should like to achieve in Dornach for the whole Movement, to the extent that our forces permit.

Karmic Relationships, VI: Lecture II

Anthroposophical friends in Berne have already heard that the aim of the Christmas Foundation Meeting at the Goetheanum was to bring a new trend into the Anthroposophical Movement. The importance of becoming conscious of this new trend cannot be stressed too often, for the gist of the matter is this: before the Christmas Foundation Meeting — in practice at any rate, even if not invariably — the Anthroposophical Society was regarded as a sort of administrative centre for the content and the impulse of Anthroposophy. This, essentially, has been the position since the Anthroposophical Society made itself independent of the Theosophical Society.

You know that I myself had no place on the Society's Executive, but have so to say held a completely free position within the Society. And in this situation the Society's development has not proceeded as it certainly could have done. The fact is that Members have been too little alive to what might have developed on this basis. What happened was that from about the year 1919 onwards — after the War, during which the problem of leadership of the Society was a very difficult one — all kinds of efforts were

made and undertakings set on foot within the Society. These undertakings were the outcome of ambitions among the Membership and proved to be detrimental to the real anthroposophical work — detrimental in the sense that they aroused very strong hostility from the outside world. Naturally, when such undertakings are set on foot in a Society resting upon occult foundations, one must, for esoteric reasons, let them be. For think of it — if from the beginning I had stood in the way of all these undertakings, most of those engaged in them would have been saying to-day that if only this or that had happened it would have led to favourable results. But there is no doubt at all that these things made the position of the Anthroposophical Movement in the world increasingly difficult.

I do not want to go into details but to take a more positive line: let me say only that the time had come to counteract by something positive the negative trend that had gradually appeared in the Society. Before the Christmas Foundation Meeting I often found it necessary to emphasise that a real foundation like the Anthroposophical Movement — which is in truth a spiritual stream guided and led from the super-sensible worlds by spiritual Powers and spiritual Forces which are reflected here in the physical worlds —

should not be identified with the Anthroposophical Society, which is simply an administrative body for the cultivation — as far as it is capable of this — of the anthroposophical impulse.

But since the Christmas Foundation Meeting at the Goetheanum this has completely changed. And it was only because of this change that there was reason and purpose in my taking over the Presidency myself, in cooperation with an Executive which as a unified organism can work with great intensity for the Anthroposophical Movement. This means that the Anthroposophical Movement and the Anthroposophical Society are now one. Therefore what was not the position before the Christmas Foundation Meeting has changed fundamentally since that Meeting. Henceforward the Anthroposophical Society is to be identical with the Anthroposophical Movement as presented in the world. But it has thus become essential that the esoteric impulse flowing through the Anthroposophical Movement shall also find expression in the whole constitution of the Anthroposophical Society. Therefore since this Christmas Foundation Meeting in Dornach it must be recognised, unconditionally, that the establishment of the Dornach Executive is itself an esoteric matter, that a stream of true esotericism must flow through the Society, and

that the institution of the Executive is to be regarded as an esoteric deed. This was the premise on which the Executive was formed.

Further, it must always be remembered that from now onwards the Anthroposophical Society will no longer exist merely as a body for the administration of Anthroposophy. Anthroposophy itself must be *practised* in everything that happens in the Anthroposophical Society. What is *done* must itself be anthroposophical. That, apparently, is what it is so difficult to realise. Nevertheless friends must gradually get it into their consciousness that this fundamental change has taken place.

As a first step, in the News Sheet appended to the Goetheanum Weekly, an effort has been made to introduce into the Society something that can provide unified substance for the membership, can further a unified flow of spiritual reality through the Movement. A unified trend of thought is made possible, particularly through the weekly ‘Leading Thoughts’ which should be a kind of basic seed for work in the Groups. It is really remarkable that so much misunderstanding still exists as to what the Anthroposophical Movement really is.

A short while ago I received a letter from a fairly recent Member of the Anthroposophical Society. This letter expatiated on the alleged incorporation of the Christian Community into the Anthroposophical Society. (The matter is of no importance here in Switzerland, but I mention it as an example.) At a certain point I had made it quite clear from the Goetheanum in Dornach how the relationship between this Christian Community and the Anthroposophical Society is to be thought of. I emphasised that I cannot in any way be regarded as the Founder of the Christian Community on the basis of the Anthroposophical Society, but that the Christian Community formed itself, through me, by the side of the Anthroposophical Society. At the time I used the expression “through me as a private individual.” The letter referred to seizes hold of this expression, “private individual,” after saying that a renewal of religion cannot come about through a human being but only from the higher spheres, for a renewal of religion can be achieved only by divine-spiritual Powers. That is quite right, but something has been overlooked … and it is essential for this ‘something’ to be fully grasped in the Anthroposophical Society. What must be grasped is that the Anthroposophical Movement as such — in which moreover there also lies the source for a renewal of religion — certainly does

not owe its origin to a human impulse alone but has been sent into the world under the influence of divine-spiritual Powers and by their impulse. Only when Anthroposophy itself is seen to be a spiritual reality which flows as an esoteric impulse through civilisation will it be possible to have the right point of view when some other body comes into being with its source in Anthroposophy … and an objection like that contained in the letter cannot arise. The consciousness must be there that henceforward the Anthroposophical Society will be led from the Goetheanum on an esoteric basis.

Connected with this is the fact that a completely new trend will pervade the Anthroposophical Movement as it must now be conceived. Therefore you too, my dear friends, will notice how differently it has been possible to speak since that time. In the future it will amount to this: in all measures taken by the Anthroposophical Movement, which is now identical with the Anthroposophical Society, the responsibility is to the spiritual Powers themselves. But this must be correctly understood. It must be realised that the title “General Anthroposophical Society” may not be used in connection with any event or fixture organised without understanding having first been reached with the Dornach Executive; that anything inaugurated by Dornach may not be made further use of without

corresponding agreement with the Executive. I am obliged to speak of this because it is constantly happening that lectures, for instance, are given under the alleged auspices of the General Anthroposophical Society without any application for permission having been made to Dornach. Matters which have an esoteric foundation, formulae and the like, are sometimes adopted without obtaining the agreement of the Dornach Executive … and this is absolutely essential, for we have to do with realities, not with administrative measures or formalities. So for all these and similar matters, agreement must be sought from or a request made to the Dornach Executive. If agreement is not forthcoming, the arrangements in question will not be regarded as issuing from the Anthroposophical Movement. This would have in some way to be made plain.

Everything that savours of bureaucracy, all administrative formalities must in the future be eliminated from the Anthroposophical Society. Relationship within the Anthroposophical Society is a purely human relationship; everything is based upon the *human* reality. Perhaps I may mention here too that this is already indicated by the fact that every one of the 12,000 Membership Cards now being issued are personally signed by me. I was advised to have a

rubber stamp made for the signature, but I shall not do so. It is only a minor point but there is, after all, a difference when I have let my eyes rest on the name of a Member; thereby the personal relationship — abstract though it be — has been made. Even if it is an external detail it should nevertheless be an indication that in future we shall endeavour to make relationships personal and human. Thus, for example, when it was recently asked in Prague whether the Bohemian *Landesgesellschaft* can become a member of the Anthroposophical Society, the decision had to be that this is not possible; *individual human beings* alone can become members of the Anthroposophical Society; they can then join together to form Groups. But they become Members as *individuals* and have the Membership Card as such. Legal entities — in other words, non-human entities — will have no such Card. Similarly the Statutes are not official regulations but a simple statement of what the esoteric Executive in Dornach wishes, out of its own initiative, to do for the Anthroposophical Movement. In future, all these things must be taken with the utmost seriousness. Only so will it be possible to bring into being in the Anthroposophical Society the attitude which, if it were absent, would make it impossible for me to take over the Presidency of the Society.

Through the Christmas Foundation, a new character and impulse is to enter into all our work. In the future, whatever is said will have a spiritual source — so that many things that have happened recently, can happen no longer. A great deal of the hostility, for instance, has arisen as a result of provocative actions in the Society. Naturally, all kinds of questionable elements play a part, but in the future we can no longer adopt towards the hostility the attitude we have adopted in the past. For the Lecture-Courses are available for everyone and can be obtained from the *Anthroposophisch-Philosophischer Verlag*. We shall not let them be advertised in the Book Trade; their release is not to be taken to mean that they will be handed over to the Book Trade, but they will be accessible to everyone. This fact in itself refutes the statement that the Anthroposophical Society is a secret society with secret literature. In the future, however, a very great deal will flow through the Anthroposophical Movement in respect of which no kind of relation with a hostile outside world will be possible. Much of what will be introduced into the teachings of the Anthroposophical Society in the future will be of such a nature that it will inevitably evoke hostility in the outside world; but we shall not worry about it because it is a matter of course.

And so I want to speak to you to-day in this spirit, to speak particularly of how different a light is shed upon the historical evolution of mankind when the study of karmic relationships in world-existence is pursued in real earnest.

At the very first gathering held in Berlin for the purpose of founding the German Section of the Theosophical Society, I chose for a lecture I proposed to give, the title: *Practical Questions of Karma*. I wanted to introduce then what I intend to achieve now, namely, the serious and earnest study of Karma.

In the German Section of the Theosophical Society at the time there were several old Members of the Society. They literally quaked at my intention to begin in such an esoteric way. And in actual fact the attitude and mood for it were not there. It was quite obvious how little the people were prepared in their souls for such things. It was impossible at that time to proceed with the theme ‘Practical Questions of Karma’ in the form that had been intended. Conditions made it necessary to speak in a much more exoteric way. But now, with more than two decades of preparatory work behind us, a beginning must be made with real esotericism. The Christmas Foundation Meeting, when the esoteric impulse came into the Society, has

actually taken place, and so now a link can be made with that time when the intention was to introduce this esoteric trend into the Society.

What *is* the historical evolution of humanity, when we consider what is revealed by the fact of repeated earthly lives? When some personality appears as a leading figure in the evolution of humanity, we must say: This personality is the bearer of an Individuality of soul-and-spirit who was already present many times in earthly existence and who carries over into this earthly life the impulses from earlier incarnations. Only in the light of his earlier earthly lives can we really understand such a personality. From this we see at once how what was working in earlier epochs of world-history is carried over from those earlier epochs by human beings themselves. The civilisation of to-day has developed out of the human beings who belong to the present in the wider sense. But they, after all, are the same souls who were there in earlier epochs and assimilated what those earlier civilisations brought into being; they themselves have carried it over into the present. The same applies to epochs other than the present. Only when we can discover what has been carried over by human souls from one epoch into the other can we understand this onflowing stream of the impulses working in civilisation. But

then we have history in the concrete, not in the abstract. People usually speak only about ideas working in world-history, about moral will or moral impulses in general which carry over the fruits of civilisation from one epoch into the others. But the bearers of these fruits of earlier civilisations are the human souls themselves, for they incarnate again and again. Moreover it is only in this way that an individual realises what he has himself become, how he has carried over that which forms the basis of his bodily destiny, his destiny in good and evil alike. When, as a first step, we ponder how history has been carried from one epoch into another by the human beings themselves in their repeated earthly lives, then, and only then are the secrets, the great enigmas of historical evolution, unveiled.

To-day I want to show by three examples how karma works through actual personalities. One of these examples leads us into the wide arena of history; the other two deal more with the reincarnations of particular individuals.

Our modern civilisation contains a great many elements that are really not altogether in keeping with Christianity, with true Christian evolution. Natural science is brought even into the elementary schools,

with the result that it has an effect upon the thinking even of people who have no scientific knowledge. These impulses are really not Christian. Whence do they originate?

You all know that about six hundred years after the founding of Christianity, *Arabism*, inspired by Mohammed, began to spread abroad. In Arabism, Mohammed founded a body of doctrine which in a certain sense was at variance with Christianity. To what extent at variance? The concept of the three forms of the Godhead — Father, Son, Spirit — is of the very essence of Christianity. The origin of this lies away back in the ancient Mysteries in which a man was led through four preparatory stages and then through three higher stages. When he had reached the fifth stage, he came forth as a representative of the Christ; at the seventh and highest stage as a representative of the Father. I want only to make brief mention of this.

It is the *Trinity* that makes it possible for the *impulse of freedom* to have its place in the evolution of Christianity. We look upwards to the Father God, seeing in the Father God the spirituality implicit in all those forces of the Universe which go out from the Moon to Earth existence. All those forces which in

Earth existence have to do with the impulses of physical germination — in man, therefore, with propagation — proceed from the Moon. It must, of course, always be remembered that the human process of reproduction has its spiritual side. From the pre-earthly existence of spirit-and-soul we come down to earthly existence, uniting with a physical body. But everything that is responsible for placing the human being, from birth onwards, into earthly life, is a creative act of the Father God, a creative act for the Earth through the Moon forces. Therefore inasmuch as throughout an earthly life man is subject to the working of the Moon forces, he is already predestined when he enters earthly existence to be exposed to impulses of a very definite kind. Hence, too, it is the essential characteristic of a Moon religion, a religion like that of the ancient Hebrews, in which the Father Principle is predominant, always to attach value in the human being only to what has been bestowed upon him through the forces of the Father God, through the Moon forces. When Christianity was founded, ancient Mystery-truths were still current in Christ’s environment — truths deriving, for example, from specific phenomena of life in the earliest period of post-Atlantean evolution. Grotesque as they seem to-day, these phenomena were grounded in the very nature of man.

During the first epoch of post-Atlantean civilisation, the ancient Indian epoch, when a man had reached the age of thirty a radical change, a complete metamorphosis, took place in his earthly life. So radical was the change that, expressed in modern words, it would have been perfectly possible for a man who had passed his thirtieth year to meet a younger man whom he had known quite well, perhaps as a friend, but when this younger man greeted him the other would simply not understand what he was trying to do. … When the older man had passed the age of thirty he had forgotten everything he had hitherto experienced on the Earth! And whatever impulse worked in him in the later years of his life was imparted to him by the Mysteries. This is how things were in the earliest period after the Atlantean catastrophe. If he wanted to know what his life had been before his thirtieth year, a man was obliged to enquire about it from the little community around him. At the age of thirty the soul was so completely transformed that the man was veritably a new being; he began a new existence, just as he had done at birth. In those days it was known that until the thirtieth year of life the forces of youth were at work: thereafter, it was the task of the Mysteries, with the very real impulses they contained, to see to it that a genuinely human existence should continue in the

man’s soul. And this the Mysteries were able to do because they were in possession of the secret of the Son.

Christ lived in an age when the secrets of the Son — I can do no more than touch upon them here — had been lost, were known only to small circles of men. But because of the experience undergone in His thirtieth year, Christ was able to reveal that He, as the last to do so, had received the Son-impulse directly from the Cosmos — in the way it must be received if after his thirtieth year a man is to be dependent upon the Sun forces just as hitherto he was dependent upon the Moon forces. Christ has enabled men to understand that the Son-principle within him is the Sun Being once awaited in the Mysteries but then as a Being not yet on the Earth. And so, just as in the ancient Mysteries men had gazed into the secrets of the Sun, it was made clear to them that their gaze must now turn to the Christ, realising that now the Sun Mystery had entered into man. In the first centuries of Christianity this wisdom was completely exterminated. Star-wisdom, cosmic wisdom, was exterminated and a materialistic conception of the Mystery of Golgotha gradually took shape; Christ was thought of as nothing more than a being who had dwelt in Jesus but men

were unwilling to realise what had actually come to pass.

Those who were true knowers in the first Christian centuries were able to say: As well as the Father God there is God the Son, the Christ God. The Father God rules over whatever is predetermined in man because it is born with him and works in him as the forces of Nature. It is upon this principle that the Hebrew religion is based. But by the side of it, Christianity places the power of the Son which during the course of man's life draws into his soul as a creative force, making him free and enabling him to be reborn, realising that in his earthly life he can become something that was *not* predetermined by the Moon forces at birth. — Such was the essential impulse of Christianity in the first centuries of its existence.

Mohammedanism set its face against this impulse in its far-reaching decree: There is no God save the God proclaimed by Mohammed. It is a retrogression to the pre-Christian principle, but clothed in a new form — as was inevitable six hundred years after the founding of Christianity. The God of Nature, the Father God — not a God of freedom by whom men are led on to freedom — was proclaimed as the one and only God. Within Arabism, where Mohammedanism was making

headway, this was favourable for a revival and renewal of the fruits of ancient cultures, and such a revival, with the exclusion of Christianity, did indeed take place in the Orient, on a magnificent scale. Together with the warlike campaigns of Arabism there spread from East towards the West — in Africa as it were enveloping Christianity — an impulse to revive ancient culture.

Over in Asia, Arabism was cultivated with great brilliance at the Court of *Haroun al Raschid* — at the time when Charles the Great was reigning in Europe. But whereas Charles the Great hardly progressed beyond the stage of being able to read and write, of developing the most primitive rudiments of culture, great and illustrious learning flourished at the Court of Haroun al Raschid. It cannot, perhaps, be said that Haroun al Raschid in himself was an entirely good man, but he possessed a comprehensive, penetrating and ingenious mind — a universal mind in the best sense. He gathered at his Court all the sages who were the bearers of whatever knowledge was available at that time: poets, philosophers, doctors, theologians, architects — all these branches of learning flourished at the Court of Haroun al Rashid, brought thither by his genius.

At this Court there lived a most distinguished and significant personality, one who — in an incarnation earlier than the one at the Court of Haroun al Raschid — had been an Initiate in the true sense. You will ask: Does an Initiate, then, not remain an Initiate as he passes through his incarnations? It is possible for a man to have been a deep Initiate in an earlier epoch and then, in a new epoch, he must use the body and receive the education which this later epoch has to offer. In such a case the forces deriving from the earlier incarnation will have to be held in the subconsciousness and whatever is in keeping with the current civilisation will have to be developed. There are men who seem, outwardly, to be products of the particular civilisation in which they are living; but their manner of life enables one to perceive in them the existence of deeper impulses; in earlier times they were Initiates. Nor do they lose the fruits of Initiation; out of their subconsciousness they act in accordance with its principles. But they cannot do otherwise than adapt themselves to the conditions of the existing civilisation.

The personality of whom tradition says that he made magnificent provision for all the sciences at the Court of Haroun al Raschid was only one of the most eminent sages of his time, with a genius for

organisation so outstanding that he was virtually the source of much that was achieved at the Court of Haroun al Raschid.

The spread of Arabism continued for many centuries, as we know from the wars waged by Europe in an attempt to keep it within bounds. But that was not the end of it: the souls who were once active in Arabism passed through the gate of death, developed onwards in the spiritual world and remained connected, in a sense, with their work. This was what happened in the case of the Individualities of Haroun al Raschid and of the wise Counsellor who lived at his Court.

To begin with, let us follow Haroun al Raschid. He passes through the gate of death and develops onwards in the spiritual world. In its external form, Arabism is repulsed; Christianity implants itself into Middle and Western Europe in the exoteric form it has gradually acquired. But although it is impossible to continue to be active in the old form of Mohammedanism, of Arabism, in Europe, it is very possible for the souls who once shared in this brilliant culture at the Court of Haroun al Raschid and there received the impulse for further achievements, to work on. And that is what they do.

We find that Haroun al Raschid himself reincarnates in the renowned personality of *Francis Bacon, Lord Bacon* — the distinguished Englishman whose influence has affected the whole of modern scientific thinking, and therewith much that is to be found in the minds of human beings to-day. Haroun al Raschid could not disseminate from London, from England, a form of culture strictly aligned with Arabism … this soul was obliged to make use of the form of Arabism that was possible in the West. But the fundamental trend and tendency of what Bacon poured into European thinking is the old Arabism in the new form. And so Arabism lives in the scientific thinking of to-day, because Francis Bacon was the reincarnated Haroun al Raschid.

The sage who had lived at his Court also passed through the gate of death, but he took a different path. He could not come down into a stream of culture as materialistic as that into which Francis Bacon could enter; he had inevitably to remain within a more spiritual stream. And so it came about that in the epoch when the influence of Francis Bacon was also taking effect, another individuality was working — in this case in Middle Europe — one who in his life of soul encountered what had issued from the soul of the reborn Haroun al Raschid. We see the Bacon stream

pouring out from England to Middle Europe, from West to East, bringing Arabism in the form it had acquired in its sweep across Spain and France. It is comprehensible, therefore, that the tenor and content of this soul should differ from the tenor and content of that other soul — who passed through the gate of death, during the period of existence in the spiritual world directed its gaze toward Eastern and Middle Europe, and was reborn in Middle Europe as *Amos Comenius*. He resuscitated what he had learned from oriental wisdom at the Court of Haroun al Raschid inasmuch as in the seventeenth century he was the one who with much forcefulness promulgated the thought that the evolution of mankind is pervaded by organised spirituality. It is often said, superficially, that Comenius believed in the Kingdom of a Thousand Years. That is a trivial way of putting it. The truth is that Comenius believed in definite epochs in the evolution of humanity; he believed that historical evolution is organised from the spiritual world. His aim was to show that spirituality surges and weaves through the whole of Nature; he wrote a “Pan-Sophia.” There is a deeply spiritual trend in what he achieved. He became an educational reformer. As is known, his aim in education was to achieve concrete perceptibility (*Anschaulichkeit*) but a thoroughly spiritual perceptibility, not as in materialism. I cannot

deal with this in detail but can only indicate how Arabism in its Western form and in its Oriental form issued from what arose in Middle Europe from the meeting of the two spiritual impulses connected with Bacon and Comenius.

Many aspects of the civilisation of Middle Europe can become intelligible to us only when we see how Arabism — in the form in which it could now be re-cast — was actually brought over from Asia by individuals who had once lived at the Court of Haroun al Raschid. This shows us how human Individuality is an active factor in the evolution of history. And then, by studying examples as striking as these, we can learn from them how karma works through the incarnations. As I have said on various occasions, what we learn from this study can be applied to our own incarnation. But to begin with we must have concrete examples.

Let us now take an example in which this country will be particularly interested. Let us take the example of *Conrad Ferdinand Meyer*, the Swiss poet. The very personality of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, apart from his poetry, may well arouse interest. He is certainly a remarkable personality. When he was composing his poems which flow along in wonderful rhythms, one can perceive how at every moment the soul was prone

to slip out of the body. In the wonderful forms of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's poems and of his prose-poems too, there is a quality belonging intrinsically to the soul. Many times in his earthly life he was destined to suffer from a clouding of consciousness when this separation of the soul-and-spirit from the physical body became too pronounced. There was only a loose connection between the soul-and-spirit and the physical body — this is quite apparent when we study the poems or the personality of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer. We say to ourselves at once that this Individuality which in the Conrad Ferdinand Meyer incarnation was only loosely connected with the physical body, must surely have passed through very remarkable experiences in earlier earthly lives.

Now investigation of earlier earthly lives is by no means always easy. Disillusionments and set-backs of every description have to be encountered in the course of such investigation. For this reason, what I say about reincarnations is most emphatically not for the purpose of satisfying cravings for sensation but always in order to shed deeper illumination upon the course of history.

As we follow the life of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, particularly in the light of this loose connection

between the soul-and-spirit and the body, we are led back to a very early incarnation in the sixth century A.D. We are led to an Individuality who, to begin with, eludes the spiritual intuition with which these things are investigated. Spiritually we are thrust back from this Individuality who in his life in Italy was finding his way into Christianity in the form in which it was spreading at that time … we can never get really near him. And then we seem to be thrown back again to the Conrad Ferdinand Meyer-incarnation, so that when in this investigation of an earlier incarnation we really seem to have got hold of the incarnation in the sixth century, we have to come back again to the later Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, without having properly understood the connection between these two incarnations. .. until at last the solution of the riddle dawns. We notice that in the mind of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer there is a thought that puzzles and misleads us — a thought which was also expressed in his story *The Saint*, dealing with Thomas Becket, the Chancellor-Archbishop of Canterbury in the twelfth century at the Court of Henry (II) of England.

It is not until we follow the connections of the thoughts and feelings working in Conrad Ferdinand Meyer while he was writing this narrative that we gain any real insight into how his mind was working. We are

led as it were from a clouding of consciousness into clarity, then again a clouding, and so on. And finally we come to the conclusion that there must be some special significance in the thought that runs through Conrad Ferdinand Meyer’s story; it must have deep roots. And then we hit upon the clue: this thought comes from an impulse in an earlier earthly life, the life when the Individuality of the later Conrad Ferdinand Meyer lived at a minor Court in Italy and played an important part in the development of Christianity. In that life he had an unusual experience. Gradually we discover that this Individuality was sent with a Christian Mission from Italy to England and this Mission founded the Archbishopric of Canterbury. The Individuality who later became Conrad Ferdinand Meyer was, on the one side, deeply affected by that form of art which has since died out but was prevalent in Italy in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. and subsequently elaborated in the Italian mosaics. The Individuality of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer lived and worked in this environment and then, filled with the impulse of contemporary Christianity, accompanied the Mission to England. After having participated in the founding of the Archbishopric of Canterbury, this individual was murdered, in strange circumstances, by an Anglo-Saxon chieftain.

This happening lived on as an impulse in the soul. And when this soul was born as Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, the destiny of that earlier time was still alive in the subconscious … the murder in England … it has something to do with the Archbishopric of Canterbury! Just as a remembrance is often evoked by the sound of a word, so it was in this case … “I once had something to do with Canterbury.” And the impulse becomes an urge in Conrad Ferdinand Meyer’s soul to describe, not his own destiny, for that remains in the subconscious, but the similar destiny of Thomas Becket, the Chancellor of Henry II of England and at the same time Archbishop of Canterbury.

The strange infirmity of soul suffered by Conrad Ferdinand Meyer also causes experience of his own destiny to slip over into that of the other personality known to him from history.

During the period of the Thirty Years’ War, when such chaotic conditions prevailed in Middle Europe, this Individuality had been incarnated as a woman. And all the chaos of those times profoundly affected the Individuality now incarnate in a female body. This woman married a rather uncouth, unpolished personality who fled from the conditions then prevailing in Germany to the region of Graubünden in

Switzerland. And there this couple lived … the woman deeply sensitive to the chaos of the impressions around her, the man more plebeian.

From the far-reaching events of that time the soul had absorbed all that struggles to come forth again in *Jürg Jenatsch*. The thoughts and emotions rise up again in Conrad Ferdinand Meyer from what he had experienced in those earlier circumstances. The difficulty is that the impressions welled up in Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's soul but that he felt compelled to transform them, because his life in the world was such that impulses were constantly rising up into his soul-and-spirit which then, in the Conrad Ferdinand Meyer-incarnation, were responsible for the very loose connection between his soul-and-spirit and his physical body.

This will indicate to you how impulses from olden times work over in a remarkable way into a man's thinking, feeling, perception and artistic achievements. The truth of such things will quite certainly never be discovered by speculation or intellectual thinking but only in genuine spiritual vision.

Personalities who attract one's attention in some earthly life are especially interesting from the point of view of their reincarnations. There is a personality who is greatly loved and held in high esteem, above all in this country, through whom we can discern how souls pass through their earthly lives. When we have real knowledge of these matters they turn out to be different from what one would naturally assume.

There is a soul … I was able to find this soul for the first time occupying a kind of priestly office in ancient Mysteries. I say, a *kind* of priestly office, for although he was not a priest of the highest rank his position in the Mysteries enabled him to do a great deal for the education of souls. In that incarnation he was a noble character, full of goodness of heart which his connection with the Mysteries had developed in him. About a hundred years before the birth of Christ it was the destiny of this personality, in line with the customs of the times, to serve under a cruel slave-owner as the foreman or manager of a host of slaves whose work was hard and heavy and who could only be handled in the way that was the accepted practice in those days. This personality must not be misjudged or misunderstood. The conditions prevailing in ancient civilisations must be seen in a different light from those of to-day; we must understand above all what it

meant for this fundamentally noble personality to have been incarnated a hundred years before the founding of Christianity as a kind of foreman-manager of a host of slaves. It was impossible for him always to act in accordance with his own impulses — that was his hard destiny. But at the same time he had established a definite relationship with the souls living in the hard-worked slaves. He obeyed the crueller personality of whom I have spoken (his ‘chief’ we should say to-day) but in such circumstances antipathies and sympathies are formed. … And when the one who often with a bleeding heart had carried out the orders he received, passed through the gate of death, his soul encountered the souls who had felt, for him too, a certain hatred. This lived itself out in the life between death and rebirth and established connections of soul-and-spirit which then worked as impulses, preparing for the next earthly life.

In the nature of things, karmic connections are formed between all human beings who have to do with one another. It was also destiny that the Individuality of whom I am speaking, who was a kind of slave-overseer and connected karmically with the chief whose orders he was bound to obey, should have made himself guilty in a certain way — it was really innocence and guilt at the same time — of all the

misery caused by the cruelty of his chief. He acquiesced in it, not out of any impulse of his own but impelled by the *force majeure* of customs and circumstances. Thus a karmic tie was established between the two. In the life between death and rebirth this took shape in such a way that the former slave-overseer was born again in the ninth century A.D. as a woman: she became the wife of the one who had been the cruel chief — and in this relationship lived through much that constituted the karmic adjustment of what I have described as a kind of 'innocent guilt' in connection with the cruelties that had been committed. But these experiences deepened the soul: much of what had been present in the ancient, priestly incarnation emerged once again, but overshadowed by great tragedy. Circumstances in the ninth century brought this wedded couple into connection with many human beings in whom there were living the souls, now reincarnated, of those who had been together with them as slaves. As a general rule, human souls are reborn during the same time-period. And again in this case there was a connection in the life on the Earth.

The souls who had once worked under the slave-overseer now lived together in spatial proximity as a fairly extensive community. The official servant of the

community — but a servant of fairly high rank — was the individual who had once been the cruel slave-owner. He had dealings with all the inhabitants of the community and experienced from them nothing but trouble; he was not their governor but it was his duty to look after many of their affairs. The wife lived through all this at his side. We find, therefore, that a number of human beings are associated with these two personalities. But the karma that had bound the two together — the erstwhile slave-owner and his overseer — this karmic tie was thereby done with. The ancient priest-individuality was no longer bound to the other; but the tie with the other souls remained, precisely because in the incarnation about 100 B.C. he had been at least the instrument for much that had been their lot. As a woman, this Individuality brought only blessing to the community, for her deeds were performed with the greatest goodness and kindness, despite the infinitely tragic experiences she was obliged to undergo.

All these shared experiences, all that wove the threads of karma — it all went on working, and during the next period of life between death and rebirth (after the ninth century and on into the modern age) impulses took shape once again whereby these human beings were held together. And now, the souls who

had once been the slaves and later on came together in a village community — these souls were born again, not in any kind of external community but at least during the same period of time. So that there was again the possibility of relationship with the Individuality — now reborn — who had been the slave-overseer a hundred years before the Christian era, and the woman in the ninth century A.D. For this Individuality was reborn as *Pestalozzi*. The souls who were also reborn more or less as contemporaries in order that karma might be fulfilled — these souls whose relationship to him was as I have described, became the pupils for whom Pestalozzi now performed deeds of untold blessing!

When one studies life and behind life as it presents itself perceives the working of souls from incarnation to incarnation … certainly it is disturbing and astounding, for things are always different from what the intellect might conjecture. Yet life's content is immeasurably deepened when it is studied in this kind of context. I think, moreover, that a man himself has really gained something when he has studied such connections. If they are drawn forth — often with very great difficulty — from their spiritual backgrounds, and if one points, as I have only been able to do in sketchy outline to-day, to what is present in visible

existence, one perceives how karma works through the course of human life. Verily, life acquires serious backgrounds when we pay attention to studies of this kind; and they can be understood if with unprejudiced minds we observe what then presents itself in the external world.

Anthroposophy does not exist in order to expound theories about repeated earthly lives or to give tabulated details of every kind, but to reveal, in all their concrete reality, the spiritual foundations of life. Men will look into the world with quite different eyes once the veils are lifted from these things. One day, if destiny permits, we shall have to speak of how they can play a part, too, in the actual deeds of men. Such knowledge will certainly show that concrete studies of karma are needed by our civilisation as an impetus and a deepening. I wanted to-day merely to lay before you these actual examples of karma. The personalities in question are well-known figures in history. Study them closely and you will find confirmation of much that I have said.

Karmic Relationships, VI: Lecture III

(From an incomplete transcript)

When we contemplate the world around us we find as our environment on Earth the beings of the mineral, plant, animal and human kingdoms, and whatever belongs to and is produced from these kingdoms — mountains, rivers, clouds and so forth. We look up to the heavens and as we contemplate the stars and the planets we shall realise as the result of anthroposophical study that, like the Earth, these different celestial bodies have their inhabitants. But as man turns his gaze to his earthly environment and also to the heavens, he finds in this spatial environment Beings who are connected with one part only of himself. We know from Anthroposophy that man is a fourfold being, composed of physical body, etheric body, astral body and Ego, and that in sleep the Ego and astral body separate from the physical and etheric bodies. But the Universe we perceive through our senses is related to our physical body only, not to our astral body or Ego. The only exceptions are two celestial bodies: the Sun and the Moon. The Sun and the Moon are the abodes of spiritual Beings just as the Earth is the abode of man.

The other celestial bodies are also peopled by spiritual Beings but during his life between birth and death man is related to them in an indirect way only. In this respect the Sun and Moon are exceptions. They are the two gates or portals through which, in physical life on Earth too, men are linked with the spiritual world. The Sun is connected with our Ego, the Moon with our astral body.

We shall begin to understand this if we turn to what has been said in the different books and lecture-courses.

You know that the Moon, now moving independently through cosmic space, was once united with the Earth; at a certain point of time it liberated itself and went out into the Universe where it now forms a kind of colony of the Earth. This applies not only to the physical Moon but also to the Beings who inhabit it. You know too that the Earth was once inhabited both by men and by certain higher Beings who were the first great Teachers of humanity. They were not incarnated in physical bodies as men are to-day but only in etheric bodies. Nevertheless intercourse between men and these Beings continued until the Atlantean epoch. In those primeval ages on Earth men were exhorted at certain times to maintain complete

stillness and calm in their souls, to be oblivious of their physical environment. And then, in those primeval men — we ourselves, in fact, for we were all on Earth in previous lives — it was as if the Great Teachers spoke from within them and they felt this as Inspiration. These Beings did not communicate their messages and teachings to men as we communicate with one another to-day, but in the way I have indicated. Works giving expression to a wonderful, primordial wisdom were the fruits of this intercourse. Modern man is fundamentally arrogant, priding himself on being infinitely clever. And so indeed he is, in comparison with the men of those remote ages. But cleverness by itself leads neither to wisdom nor to real knowledge. Cleverness is due to the intellect and intellect is not the only instrument for acquiring knowledge. It was by deeper forces of the soul that men in primeval times were led to the knowledge which they did not express in intellectual phraseology or in terms of our pedantic grammar — for all grammar is pedantic — but in language that was half poetry. Beings at an advanced stage of evolution, the primeval sages who taught men through Inspiration, were the originators of works of supreme beauty, fragments of which have been preserved to this day. Only the dull-witted could fail to wonder at the Vedic literature, the Yoga and Vedanta philosophy of India,

the lore of ancient Persia and Egypt. The more thoroughly we steep ourselves in these records, the more obvious it is that although we of the modern age are far cleverer than those ancient men, the knowledge they presented in a most beautiful, poetic form leads very deeply into world-mysteries. The scripts which fill us with such admiration and astonishment if our hearts are rightly attuned are only the last vestiges of the wonderful, primordial wisdom that once existed in humanity as oral tradition and that Spiritual Science alone is able to investigate. But men have outgrown this wisdom in its primal form. They would not have reached maturity nor achieved freedom in knowledge through their own efforts had they continued at the stage of that ancient wisdom.

The great Teachers, having fulfilled their task, left the Earth together with the Moon which as a physical planet had gone out into the Universe. Today the great Teachers form a kind of spiritual colony on the Moon and a seer who investigates the Moon with the help of Initiation-Science finds it peopled by those wise Beings who were once the companions of men. The wisdom of these Beings can even now be investigated through a higher development of the faculties described in the book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*. These Beings have an important task to

perform for humanity — a task which it is difficult to describe in earthly words.

The Moon Beings keep the “books,” the records, of the whole past of humanity and of every individual man. These books are not, of course, anything in the least like the volumes in our libraries but this designation is nevertheless justifiable. The “books” contain records of what every individual human being has experienced in his successive earthly lives. When we are descending from the Cosmos to the Earth from the existence stretching between death and a new birth, we come into inner contact with the records of our past in these great “books” kept by the Moon sages. Before we arrive on the Earth, this past is imprinted in the astral body we bring with us into earthly existence and in that astral body are the “entries” made by the Moon Beings.

In ordinary circumstances these entries do not reach the head. During earthly life the head is by no means an organ of outstanding importance, although it is, of course, essential for the concepts and ideas relating to outer, material existence. What is inscribed into man during the final stage of his descent from the Cosmos to the Earth is inscribed — believe it or not as you will — into the part of him we call the spiritual side of the

metabolic-limb system. The inscriptions therefore lie deep down in the unconscious, but they are actually there and they pass over into the process of growth, into the health and above all they determine what I will call the “curability” (*Heilbarkeit*) of a human being when he is ill on Earth. It is obviously important to understand the nature of illness but even more important to understand how to heal. Supersensible knowledge itself is an essential help, for this reveals what has been inscribed from the Akasha Chronicle by the Moon Beings into the forces of the process of growth, into the forces of nourishment, into the forces of breathing, and so on. It is these inscriptions that determine whether a man puts up strong or only slight resistance to the healing of an illness. One individual will be easily healed, another only with difficulty. This is entirely dependent upon how the karma from previous earthly lives makes it possible for the inscriptions to take effect.

When we think about what the Moon, together with the Beings who inhabit it spiritually, means for us on the Earth, we are finally led to say that the Moon is intimately connected with our past, with our previous earthly lives. To understand what the Moon existence out yonder in cosmic space means on Earth is to have intuitive perception of man’s past. Destiny is formed

out of what we bring over from our previous earthly life, that is to say, from our past, and what we experience during the present life. And out of what can be experienced in the present life, together with our past, our *future* destiny takes shape.

In its cosmic aspect, therefore, the Moon with its Beings is revealed as the power which carves the pattern of our past in our destiny. You will realise from this how little is known to-day about the true functions of the celestial bodies. Information about the Moon such as we are accustomed to hear from the physical sciences to-day is not knowledge in the true sense. A modern physicist who purports to describe the Moon assumes that the mountain ranges depicted on lunar maps were always there. This is a very naive belief. The Moon Beings themselves were always there, the soul-and-spirit belonging to the Moon was always there, but *not* the physical substance. You will be able to understand this by thinking of man himself. In the course of a man's earthly life the physical substances in his body are perpetually changing. After a period of seven to eight years, all the substances originally within us have been replaced. What has remained is the soul-and-spirit, and the same applies to the heavenly bodies. The substance of the Moon, although of longer duration than the substance of the human

body, has all changed in the course of the ages; spirit-and-soul alone has remained. With these things in mind, our view of the Universe is altogether different from that presented by the material knowledge of to-day. This knowledge is extremely astute, highly intellectual; above all it can calculate with deadly accuracy. The calculations are accurate — but they are not *true*. Suppose someone makes calculations about the structure of the heart. He scrutinises it to-day and again in a month's time. It has changed, very slightly. After another month the change is again slight, and then he works out to what extent the heart changes in a year. He need only multiply and he has the figure for ten years. He can calculate what the measurements of the heart were three hundred years ago, and what they will be three hundred years from now. The calculations will certainly be correct. Only — the heart did not exist three hundred years ago, nor will it exist three hundred years hence! The same procedure is adopted in other cases. The calculations are invariably correct but they do not tally with the reality! The same applies to the outer substantiality of the heavenly bodies. Their substance changes but the element of soul-and-spirit remains. And in the case of the Moon it is this element of soul-and-spirit that is woven into our destiny by the great Recorders of our past life and therefore constitutes part of the web of our destiny.

So the Moon is in truth one of the portals showing man the way into the spiritual world — the world out of which his destiny is woven by Beings who were once his wise companions of the Earth in times when men themselves wove their destiny instinctively. The weaving of destiny now takes place entirely in the subconscious.

Still another portal leads into the spiritual world: it is the portal of the Sun. When through Initiation-science we acquire knowledge of the Sun, the Beings we encounter are not connected with the Earth in the same way as the Moon Beings; in the Sun sphere we do not encounter Beings who once had their abode on the Earth. The Beings we encounter in the Sun are referred to in the book *Occult Science* as the Angeloi and the higher Beings of the Hierarchies. When I say “in the Sun,” you must of course picture such Beings in the whole Sun sphere, in the flood of light radiating from the Sun.

The Sun is the abode of the Angeloi, one of whom is always connected with an individual human being. We ourselves, in respect of our Ego are connected with these higher Beings through our Sun existence. The Angeloi are in a certain sense the cosmic prototypes of men, for in future times man will attain their rank.

These Beings, with whose nature we ourselves have a certain relationship, have their abode in the Sun sphere. From this you will realise that just as our past is connected with the Moon existence, so is our future connected with the Sun existence. Moon and Sun represent our past and our future. When we know on the one side that the Moon Beings are the “bookkeepers,” the “recorders” of our past, that records of our past earthly lives are inscribed, as it were, on the leaves of their books, Initiation-Science makes it clear that we must turn to the Angeloi when we give any thought to our future. Just as what we have done in the past works on into our present life, the things we do in the present must work on into the future. But this is possible only through the Angeloi who direct their gaze to a man’s present deeds and bring them to effect in the future.

It is good and right to take account of this function of the Angeloi. We do many things that ought to bear fruit in the future. Humanity of the present age has become sadly thoughtless about such matters. When a man has performed some deed he should think of his Angelos, saying inwardly: “May my Guardian Spirit receive this my deed as a root and from it bring forth fruit.” The more definite and vivid the imagery used when a man addresses his Angelos in connection with

deeds which should subsequently bear fruit, the more abundant this fruit can be in the future.

And so the Moon Beings preserve our past destiny and the Sun Beings weave new destiny for the future. It is not outer, physical light alone that the Sun and Moon send down to the Earth. Being connected as it is with our astral body, the Moon provides the initial impulse whereby everything from our past is woven into our destiny. The Sun is connected with our Ego and through the Beings who are a prototype of our future cosmic existence, has to do with our future destiny. And so the heavenly mirror-pictures of our destiny are images of the relationship between Sun and Moon.

Initiation-Science explains and confirms these facts. When a man has achieved the necessary degree of development as I have described it in the book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds*, he then sees, when he contemplates the Full Moon, not only what normal consciousness sees. In the light of the Full Moon he perceives his past destiny, the content of his previous earthly life. And when with enhanced spiritual vision he focuses his gaze upon the place occupied by the dark, physically invisible New Moon, its dark shadow becomes for him the great Admonisher formed by his

destiny, proclaiming to him what his attitude must be to actions in his previous earthly life in order that he may make compensation for them in the further course of his karma.

It is possible for a man to establish a similar relationship with the Sun. This enables him to have an inkling of future destinies — a general glimpse, at least, without specific details.

If we now turn from the cosmic aspect to man himself, we find that human destiny is woven in a wonderful way out of two kinds of circumstances. When two individuals meet each other, one of them, let us say, in his twenty-fifth year, the other in his thirtieth, it may be the case — not, of course, always — that when the one or the other looks back over his life up to this point he realises with absolute certainty that each of them has pursued his path of life as though they were deliberately seeking for one another. To ignore such things simply denotes lack of thought. The child had already set out upon the path that led inevitably to the other human being and the latter’s path too led to the common meeting-point. All this took place in the subconscious realm — but what has been at work there? Think of the one individual as A and the other as B. Before entering into earthly life,

A descended through the Moon sphere. The Moon Beings had inscribed in their records and also into his astral body, what he had experienced in common with B in the past earthly life, and these entries made by the Moon Beings in the Akasha Chronicle influenced the paths taken by both A and B. From the moment they meet, the subconscious is no longer all-important, for the two now come face to face and make a certain impression on one another. This is not a case of conservation of the past; it is the *present* that is now at work. The Angeloi intervene and lead the individuals concerned to further stages. The forces of Sun existence are now operating, so that within a man's inmost being, Sun and Moon together weave his destiny. This can be clearly visualised by thoughtful perception of the course of human life.

When two individuals meet, the impression they make upon each other may be intrinsically different. There are cases where one of the two takes the other right into the sphere of his *will*, of his feelings. The outer, personal impression has had little influence here. Intellectualists have no understanding of what is going on inwardly in such cases, for one of the most wonderful experiences imaginable is to see what kind of relationship is formed when two human beings come across each other for the first time. It may

happen that A takes B into the sphere of his will by saying to himself: What B does I want to do myself; what pleases him, also pleases me. — Now B may be unsightly and unattractive and nobody can conceive that he could possibly be pleasing to A. — You see, the attraction in this case is not caused by the reasoning mind or by the sense-impressions, but by the deeper forces of the soul — by the will and what goes from the will into the heart. However unsightly the other may be, he has become so only in the present earthly life. The origin of the bond between the two lies in the experiences they shared in the previous life. Seen from outside it seems that the two cannot possibly live in harmony, but the fact is that what is present subconsciously in each of them leads their wills together. Even in childhood this often becomes evident. A child tries so hard to be like “him,” to have the same wishes as “he” has, to feel as “he” feels. A karmic connection is certainly present in such circumstances.

That is one kind of meeting between individuals and if they were alive to such happenings — as will inevitably be the case in a by no means distant future, when more attention will be paid to man’s inner nature — the working of the will would indicate that past earthly lives have already been spent in company

with such individuals; moreover subconscious soul-forces give hints of experiences shared with others in the past incarnation.

The other kind of meeting is this. — One individual comes across another but no relationship whatever is established between their wills; the aesthetic or mental impression is predominant. How often it happens that a man A makes the acquaintance of man B, but does not afterwards refer to him with the warmth or abhorrence with which he speaks of someone with whom he has a karmic connection from earlier times. One may praise an individual with whom there is no karmic tie, one may appreciate him, consider him a splendid fellow, but he makes no effect upon the will — he makes an effect only upon the mind, upon the aesthetic sense.

That is the second kind of meeting between individuals. If the effect made by the two upon each other reaches into the will, into the heart, into the inmost nature, then a karmic connection exists; the two individuals have been led to each other as the result of common experiences in the past earthly life. If an effect made by another person reaches only into the intellect, into the aesthetic sense, this is not an outcome of the Moon’s activity, but a situation

brought about by the Sun and one that will have its sequel only in the future. And so through a thoughtful, observant study of human life we can learn to perceive the signs of karmic connections.

What I have now told you is a fruit of knowledge attainable through Anthroposophy, and just as nobody need himself be an artist to see beauty in a picture, as little need a man himself be an Initiate to understand these things. They can be understood because the ideas harmonise. There are people who say: The spiritual world is no concern of ours; we shall understand it only when we are actually in it. — They say this because they are accustomed nowadays to accept as proof only what can be confirmed in a material, physical way. Such people are like dunderheads who say: Everything in the wide world must be supported — otherwise it falls down; the Earth, the Moon, the Sun — all have their places in cosmic space but they must have supports to prevent them from falling! Such people do not know that the cosmic bodies mutually support each other. Anthroposophy calls for this kind of understanding. Its ideas cannot be supported by external, physical proofs, but for all that they mutually support each other. When you read an anthroposophical book for the first time, you may lay it aside because you are

accustomed to find everything proved up to the hilt and in this book there are no such proofs. But if you read on you will find that like the cosmic bodies the ideas support and sustain each other.

The teachings can be understood even when one is not an Initiate, but through Initiation-Science they become much more concretely real and are experienced differently. Therefore someone who is sufficiently advanced is able to speak in a different way about the web of human destiny that is woven out of the past, the present and the future. The experiences of a person who has reached a certain stage of Initiation become much more concrete. — Suppose that somebody is standing in front of you; he tells you something and you hear it clearly. An Initiate can hear the *inner* voice as well as the outer; he can hear the spiritual speech which is no less clear than ordinary human speech. A person with whom an Initiate was karmically connected in the past and whom he meets in the present life, speaks to him as clearly and unambiguously as people speak in the ordinary way. The Initiate hears an inner speech. You will say: then an Initiate must have around him a whole collection of people who speak to him with varying degrees of clarity. And that is actually the case. At the same time it is concrete proof of the way

in which the previous earthly life has been spent. I have said that the Moon Beings, the great Recorders, register destiny; but immediately an Initiate encounters someone with whom he was karmically connected in the previous earthly life, the light of the Full Moon radiates to him the recorded ‘entries’ of the other individual.

What we think and do in the immediate present does not at once speak to us, but after a certain time, by no means very long, our deeds that have been registered by the Moon Beings become living and, in a sense, articulate. The Akashic pictures are *living* pictures; if you discover the content of a past earthly life you learn to know both yourself and the other human being concerned. Common experiences of the past incarnation rise up into consciousness; no wonder that we hear them speak both from within ourselves and from within the other individual. We are united inwardly with those with whom we were associated in the previous earthly life.

In the future men must develop a delicate feeling for the stirrings of the will when meeting another person. In about seven to nine thousand years all human beings on the Earth will be able to hear those with

whom they are karmically connected, speaking from within.

Now if, after Initiation has been attained, a meeting takes place with someone with whom there is no karmic bond, who is encountered for the first time, again the experience is different. Naturally, an Initiate may also come across individuals with whom he is not karmically connected. In any case his experience will differ from that of others. He has a fine and delicate feeling for new facts revealed by the individual confronting him, in this case, as a *cosmic* being.

An individual encountered for the first time enables us to see more deeply into the Cosmos. It is a piece of good fortune to meet such a person and recognition that this meeting enlarges our knowledge of the world must develop into fine sensitivity. An Initiate has a certain obligation in connection with every individual with whom he has no karmic connection from the past, whom he encounters for the first time in the Cosmos (the spiritual world). He must link himself with the spiritual Being belonging to the realm of the Angeloi who is the Guardian Spirit of this individual. He must become acquainted not only with the individual himself but with his Guardian Angel as well. The Guardian Angel of this individual speaks

unambiguously from within him. Hence when an Initiate encounters different human beings with whom he has no karmic bond, he hears a clear and definite speech. He hears what the Angeloi of these individuals are saying.

This gives a certain character to the intercourse between an Initiate and ordinary men. He takes into himself what the Angelos wishes to say to the person who has come into his ken; he transforms himself as it were into the Angelos of this person and what he can say to the latter is therefore more intimate than it is for ordinary consciousness. The Initiate is actually a different being in all his contacts with individuals whose first meeting with him is in the Cosmos, because he has identified himself with the Angelos of each individual concerned. This is the secret of the faculty of self-transformation possessed by those who with the power bestowed by Initiation come face to face with other men. People to-day have very little feeling for such things compared with the faculty of perception they possessed in centuries by no means very long ago. It might have happened then that a sage, confronting twenty other persons, would have been described quite differently by each of them. The commonplace verdict in such circumstances would be that as each of the twenty descriptions given was

quite different from all the rest, none of the twenty writers actually saw the individual in question. But perhaps they all did! He changed in every case by establishing a link with the Angelos of each person concerned.

In this connection a veritable abyss lies between what is accepted usage today and what was taken for granted not so very long ago. A great deal of learning is available in our time but it is communicated in an entirely different way. In the higher training given in an epoch not far behind us, those who were called upon to be leaders of the people as priests or teachers were taught to develop the capacity to unite themselves with the Angelos of a human being. But even remembrance of this has vanished. Knowledge of the Angeloi was indispensable for those who aspired to be leaders of mankind, in order to develop the power of self-transformation.

And now something else. — It will strike you as extraordinary — I have spoken of it in the book *Christianity as Mystical Fact* — that there are great similarities in biographies of ancient Initiates. Study these biographies and you will find that very many features are alike, for the great Initiates underwent similar experiences in their souls. Biographies of

ordinary human beings would never be alike. If those who encountered Zarathustra had all written about him, every characterisation would have been different, because Zarathustra changed every time an individual came before him. What the world was meant to know about the great Initiates was biography inspired by higher Spirits.

When the meeting between an Initiate and some individual takes place for the first time in the Cosmos, the Initiate has to establish contact with the Angelos of that individual. In doing so he acquires a great deal of knowledge about the outer spiritual world. In point of fact one cannot acquire deeper knowledge of other human beings through spiritual faculties without learning to know a host of Angeloi. A true knowledge of man is impossible without knowledge of the Angeloi. Just as human beings not karmically connected with each other acquire knowledge of the surrounding world through ordinary perception, the Initiate gains knowledge of the world of the Angeloi — which is then the bridge between himself and the higher Hierarchies.

There are also other indications of the existence of a karmic connection. We may meet an individual and then have a great deal to do with him, work with him

and so on, but we never dream about him. The reason is that the karmic connection is not with our astral body, but only with our Ego.

We may come across someone of whom we have only a fleeting glance and yet he follows us into our very dreams — into our waking dreams too. Our picture of him is quite unconnected with his outward appearance and has arisen entirely in the inner life, because we have a karmic tie with him. Again we may meet someone with whom we are karmically connected and feel impelled to paint him. An artist may paint a portrait in which an uncultured person sees no likeness whatever, whereas an Initiate may recognise a previous incarnation of the individual whose portrait has been painted. We get to know someone with whom we have a karmic connection in the depths of his being although the knowledge may remain subconscious. Through individuals with whom we have had no previous karmic connection, whom we meet for the first time, we enlarge our knowledge of humanity in general.

When you go to a tea-party or some such function, just keep your ears open and listen to the conversation. — If someone has met another individual with whom he is karmically connected, he

will say little about the others present, but about this particular individual he will say something of real significance, especially if he is unaware of what is behind it all. At the same kind of tea-party you may get into conversation with someone with whom you have no karmic connection at all. Your interest in him is very superficial and he seems to you to be typical of all the other guests. Such a gathering is very brief as a rule, and a great deal of talk goes on about world affairs, about noted politicians and the like. After listening to these few people we may judge the whole of society by this criterion. The judgement may be erroneous but nevertheless it is through individuals with whom we have no karmic connection that another aspect of the world is presented to us. There was once a traveller who happened to reach Konigsberg Station at midnight. He asked for a cup of coffee and was addressed in very coarse language by the red-headed waiter who had been dozing. The traveller wrote in his diary: “The people of Konigsberg have red hair, are sleepy and coarse.” He was judging all the people of Konigsberg by this night-waiter — someone with whom he had no karmic connection!

Through studies of this kind we learn not only how to assess life and its values, but we get nearer to other human beings and are connected with them in a

different way. We learn not only to understand human life — which is the essential task of Anthroposophy — we also learn to know *cosmic* life. Sun and Moon cease to be the subject of abstract theories and become living realities in the Cosmos — the great counterparts in the Universe of the microcosmic destiny of men on the Earth.

Sun-activity combines with Moon-activity in our life. The light radiating to us from the Moon is connected with our cosmic *past* and the light of the Sun is connected with our cosmic *future*.

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It was the aim of the Christmas Meeting, when the Anthroposophical Society was given a new foundation, to stress the importance of Anthroposophy for life itself. It was said that esotericism in the true sense of the word must be a living power among us. The Christmas Meeting was not intended merely to be a festive gathering of a number of Anthroposophists, but its efficacy and its impulses were meant to endure. One new plan is to issue a News Sheet — as a matter of fact the first three numbers have already appeared — containing reports of what is going on in the Anthroposophical Society. The Society must become a

kind of living, spiritual organism. On my journeys I have constantly found Members in The Hague, for example, saying: “We have no idea what the Members in Vienna are doing, and yet we belong to an Anthroposophical Society!” — I wonder how many here in Zurich could tell me what is going on in the Groups of the Society in Leipzig or Hamburg? But this is what must be possible in future. Members of the New Zealand Group should have a real picture of what is going on in Vienna, and so on. It will be helpful if the Members will send to the editorial office of the News Sheet accounts of their experiences both in the Society and outside it. This material will then be edited, and Members will be able to read about whatever is going on in the Society. I propose in future to include in the News Sheet short, concentrated aphorisms for use in the Group Meetings or on other occasions.

All these measures should instil real life, pulsating life, into the Anthroposophical Society, and every Member should realise that this was the aim of the Christmas Meeting. Moreover it is only because this is how things ought to be, and indeed *must* be, if Anthroposophy itself is to do justice to its past and future, that I have undertaken the Presidency, associated with an Executive which I know will work

fruitfully from the centre at the Goetheanum. I had for many years kept apart from all administrative matters, and had it not been an absolute necessity I should not have thought of starting anew and repeating in old age what one did as a young man. I want to appeal to every Member of the Anthroposophical Society to help in ensuring that through the Christmas Meeting the foundation stone of anthroposophical life shall be laid in the hearts of our Members and that it shall develop as a living seed, so that active life may constantly increase in the Society. If that happens, the Society will also be able to send its impulse out into the world.

Karmic Relationships, VI: Lecture IV

From various anthroposophical sources you know of the significance of the heavenly bodies for man's existence and I shall speak to-day of a particular aspect of this subject.

When during life on Earth we look around at our terrestrial and cosmic environment, our physical senses, even when they reach as far as the stars, perceive only what is connected with the part of our human constitution that is laid aside at death. We know from Anthroposophy that the physical body derives its forces, as well as its material composition, from what surrounds us on the Earth. In addition to the physical body we have an etheric body, and just as the physical body draws its forces and material components from the Earth, so does the etheric body draw its forces and components from the extraterrestrial Cosmos, from the etheric world. This etheric world surrounds the Earth in the expanse of space; in it the stars are embedded and from it the light streams down to the Earth from the Cosmos. Thus we owe our physical and etheric existence to what is visible in our terrestrial environment or cosmic environment. But within this etheric environment of

the Earth there are two heavenly bodies which may be said to be gates or portals into the spiritual world. These are the two cosmic bodies of Sun and Moon to which everyone possessed of deeper insight into the structure of the universe has always attached the greatest possible importance for human life.

If we study man with anthroposophical insight we know that as well as the physical and etheric bodies he has within him his astral body and Ego. But if we direct our attention to the astral body and Ego of man we shall find that in the cosmic expanse perceptible to our physical senses, including even the world of stars, there is nothing in the least akin to them. We find only what is akin to our physical and etheric nature. In the whole wide universe actually or potentially visible to our senses or comprehensible to the intellect there is nothing that provides any forces or components for our astral body and Ego. The Moon and the Sun, however, are like gates into the world from which these members of our being originate.

You know that in my book *Occult Science* and other writings, reference is made to the time when the physical Moon separated from the Earth with which it once formed a single body in the Cosmos. But this physical and etheric separation is not the only matter

with which we should be concerned in connection with the Moon existence and human life. The separation of the Moon is a very significant *spiritual* fact.

I have often said that in very ancient times man possessed a primordial wisdom. We are very proud nowadays of our intellectual acumen, of knowledge based upon reason and observation. This kind of knowledge was not possessed by early humanity. The Earth, and man together with the Earth, had necessarily to develop to a certain stage before such knowledge was possible. Without this development man would not have been able to use his physical body and its delicate nervous system for the acquisition of intellectual knowledge. The primordial knowledge possessed by man was an instinctive knowledge, expressed in a form altogether different from that adopted by modern scholarship. What men knew about the mysteries of the world in those ancient times was expressed in poetical language of great majesty and what tradition has preserved or can be discovered in existing records is no more than an echo of the power of that ancient wisdom. We may well be filled with wonder today when we study the Vedas or the Vedanta philosophy; we may marvel at the glorious verses of the Bhagavad Gita and recognise the sublimity of all these works, but it must

be remembered that they are only the last offshoots of something infinitely greater and more powerful. Men owed this wisdom to the fact that they lived in communion with Beings whose existence was on a higher level than that of modern humanity and naturally also of the humanity of those days. These Beings had no physical body comparable with that of man to-day; they moved about the Earth in etheric bodies but nevertheless shared a life in common with humanity.

Since they had no physical body, these Beings were not able to converse with men in the way that one person converses with another to-day. But in certain states of consciousness the men of those ancient times, that is to say we ourselves in earlier incarnations, were aware of certain feelings and thoughts of which we knew that they did not spring from within our own being, as little as what we hear from someone else through oral communication springs from within ourselves. The much higher and more powerful knowledge possessed by these etheric Beings was as it were ‘inspired’ into men in a spiritual way. Thus in earlier incarnations in the primeval periods of the Earth’s existence, we communed with non-physical Beings. These Beings are no longer and for long ages have not been part of earthly life. They

have withdrawn from intercourse with men and only a few sparse remnants have been preserved of the world-secrets once revealed through these Beings in the remote past. Moreover it can be said with truth that even these few remnants are not really understood.

To what habitation, then, have these Beings of the ancient past withdrawn? When the physical Moon separated from the Earth, these Beings followed after it into the universe. I have already spoken about this but to-day I want to say something more, so that when we turn our gaze to the Moon we shall be aware that this cosmic body is inhabited by Beings who were once the companions of mankind on Earth. It may seem as if these Beings have no connection with the man living on Earth in his physical body: nevertheless there *is* a connection and it is of this that I want to speak. Simply from the fact that long ago these Beings were man's companions on Earth we may conclude that they are connected in some way with his past. And this is in fact the case.

A man's life here on Earth in his physical body is interwoven with what we call destiny. Destiny or 'karma' — the oriental term we are accustomed to use

— is a very mysterious factor in human life but its most significant connections are not always perceived.

Suppose two people who have never seen each other before, meet at a particular moment. From this moment something that is the result of joint action begins to play a part in their lives. Their recognition of each other is mutual and they know that from now on they will have a great deal to do with each other. If two people in this situation review the course of their lives since childhood, they will find, if they observe with sufficient detachment, that everything they did up to the moment of their meeting had a definite significance in that every step they took since childhood seems from the beginning to have been so cleverly directed that the path led them to the point where the meeting took place. If, starting from the time when they met and began to form a friendship, they look back over their past lives without preconceived notions it will seem that since a certain starting-point in their distant childhood, every step led them inevitably to the place where they finally met. Whatever they did so purposefully was of course done unconsciously; the conscious period began only after the meeting but the conscious and the unconscious unite in a remarkable way. In the weaving of our destiny there is a great difference between the path

we have arranged unconsciously so that we may meet the other person, and what we do after the meeting has taken place. Then he is actually before us, we understand what he says and we adjust our actions to what he is doing in external life; thereafter we lead a common life of which our senses and intellect are aware. But we shall see how that common life is interwoven with what we did until the time we met. We may well ask: what is it that is taking effect in all these forces and movements which finally bring us together?

There may also be some event lying ahead of us. Every aspect of destiny comes into consideration. We shall find that there is a great difference between experiences of the two kinds of events. There are, in fact, two ways of encountering another human being in life. In the one case we immediately have a feeling, or at least we have it as soon as we have come across the man or the event in question — a feeling which we take into the sphere of our *will*. We get to know the person: what he is, what he now does in company with us — all this we experience in the realm of our will; we want to think as he thinks, to feel as he feels, to will as he wills. We actually feel that he is beginning to be active within our own being. He sets something astir within us, something that originates in him but

nevertheless lives in our will and from our will pervades our whole soul. Indeed we learn in this way to know ourselves better, inasmuch as in our life of will and in the deeper feelings connected with our will, we become aware that the person not only makes an impression upon us from outside, but stirs something into activity within us. That is one way in which our destined encounter with another human being takes effect.

In another case we are less inwardly stirred by an acquaintanceship; we observe the person more from outside, forming an opinion of him by the impression he makes upon our intelligence, upon our aesthetic sense. There is a very great difference between these two kinds of acquaintanceship.

Suppose we get to know someone, then we go away and are tempted to talk about our new acquaintance. There will be a noticeable difference in the way we speak about the different people we know. On one occasion the way in which we speak makes it quite obvious to others that we are putting something of ourselves into our words. We may speak about the other person as though he were handsome, but in point of fact he is the very reverse and those who are listening simply cannot understand why we speak of

him as we do; he appears to them to be the reverse of good-looking, hence they cannot understand how anyone can possibly rhapsodise about him. But we are not in the least concerned with what others may see in him from an aesthetic point of view; we are not talking about the impression he makes upon us from outside. We are talking about the inner effect he arouses in us and what we say about him need not tally with the impression he makes upon others.

In the case of another acquaintance it is different. We have a good eye for whether he is handsome or the reverse. From the way we speak it is clear that here the impressions made upon our intellect, our senses and our aesthetic judgement have been the criterion. We may, for instance, refer to him as a fine fellow. You know quite well that there are acquaintances of whom it would never occur to us to speak in this superficial way. The actual language we use is such that other people will immediately understand what we mean, if they know the individual or get to know him later on.

It is a simple fact that these are two ways of describing individuals we meet. The first case indicates that when we meet the individual in question the existence we share in the previous

earthly life is set astir within us; something is pointing back to earlier incarnations when we lived in each other's company. In the second case we judge externally; we express our opinions in a way that others can immediately understand, because we were not together in an earlier earthly life but may perhaps have met him for the very first time in the present incarnation.

If spiritual insight enables us to penetrate to what lies at the root of the destiny which reveals itself in so definite a form in the first case, we shall find the following. — Before the human being comes down to physical existence on Earth and while, before the actual descent, he is passing through the Moon sphere, there is implanted into his astral body the karma he shares in common with other human beings. It is implanted into him for his present earthly existence by those Beings who once lived on Earth together with men and who then withdrew to the Moon sphere. These are the Beings through whose sphere we pass before we descend into earthly existence. It is they who since they left the Earth and their companionship with men, concern themselves with recording the destiny which individuals have in common. Thus it is that when we come across another person in the first of the two ways I described, what

reverberates within us has been recorded in those great books of destiny kept by the Moon Beings with their knowledge of the lives of men on Earth. These are books in which spiritual ‘accounts’ are kept and they contain entries of everything we have experienced in common with other men. As we pass through the Moon sphere we read in those books what we are to bring with us to the Earth, and then, with the help of what we have thus read, we direct our path — perhaps for twenty-five to thirty years — until we finally meet in earthly existence the individual of whom we had read in these Moon-books before we descended to the Earth that we had shared certain experiences with him in a previous earthly life.

These mysterious connections are organised in a wonderful way. We must look up to the Moon existence with feelings deepened through Anthroposophy, having in mind not only the information given by physical science but also what Spiritual Science can tell us about the spiritual aspect of the Moon. There are many analogies which make this sphere of cosmic existence intelligible. The analogy drawn from earthly life is supported by knowledge to which little attention is paid.

It has often been emphasised here that in seven or eight years the physical substance of a man's body has completely changed. Physical substance is thrust out through the skin; nails and hair are cut. This indicates, and it is actually the fact, that man thrusts out physical substance from the centre of his being and produces new substance to replace it. What you cut from your nails today was within your organism seven or eight years ago; you thrust it out and have now got rid of it. Physical substance is renewed. Any of you who may have been here ten years ago must not imagine that the same muscles and the same physical components are present to-day, for that is not so. But the soul-and-spirit of each of you — that *is* present. The same is true of the heavenly bodies. The physicist is concerned only with the physical substance and speaks as if the Moon he now sees in the heavens were the same Moon whose physical substance once separated from the Earth. But that is just as nonsensical as to believe that the muscles and physical components which were here ten years ago are here again to-day. It takes longer for the heavenly bodies to change their substance, but they do indeed change it. The physical Moon should not really be spoken of in the way that modern science speaks. What has endured in the Moon are the spiritual Beings who were once inhabitants of the Earth together with

men. The Moon that is now their habitat has changed — that is to say, its physical substance has changed. And just as it is your soul-and-spirit which forms the link between the ‘you’ who sat here ten years ago and the ‘you’ of to-day, so it is the Beings of spirit-and-soul who in reality constitute the essence of the Moon. And these are the Beings who register our past.

This whole subject can be further deepened when expounded in the light of Initiation-knowledge. So far I have explained how in the case of acquaintances of the first kind something begins to stir in us, and how this is what the Moon Beings make it possible for us to read in their records *before* we descended to the Earth. An Initiate has a very different experience of a meeting of this kind. He, like everyone else, meets other human beings during his life; but whereas a man with ordinary consciousness merely has the feeling that he takes the other human being into the sphere of his will and does not judge him only by the external impression he makes, the Initiate can actually see the earlier incarnations of the personalities whom he encounters. He sees not only the physical man together with his qualities of soul-and-spirit but he sees behind him a shadowy picture of the man’s previous life or perhaps of several lives. Through spiritual perception we get to know a man in such a

way that he seems to be a whole series of persons who are as objectively real as the one physically in front of us. In civilisations where some inkling of these things still survived, attempts were actually made to portray them. Certain old pictures portray a human figure, behind it and a little higher, a second, and behind that a third, a little higher still. In this way attempts were made to capture in painting the impression which the Initiate has of an acquaintance in whom he perceives not only the qualities of which he is the bearer in this life but what comes over with him from previous incarnations. It may be said, and it is in strict conformity with Spiritual Science, that whatever is karmically connected with a human being is clearly perceptible to an Initiate but is no more than a dim inkling to ordinary consciousness.

Whatever works and weaves from our past into our destiny may be called the Moon-element in us. The effect of this is that if we meet a human being who is karmically connected with us we are really always meeting a plurality. For the Initiate, this means acquaintance with a number of human beings in the one or at very least in several human lives; and this recognition of the earlier lives is as vivid to him as that of the present life.

Now let us consider the other kind of acquaintanceship where we judge a man more by the external, aesthetic impression he makes, by what our intellect or our senses tell us about him; the impression can be understood by everyone. In this case, if it is studied by the methods of Spiritual Science, it will be found that nothing leads back to the past; no Beings in the Moon sphere have prepared the way to this acquaintanceship in earthly life; nothing has been inscribed in the Moon sphere into the astral body of the man concerned. Other forces are working here, forces of soul-and-spirit connected with the Sun existence. In this second kind of acquaintanceship, the Sun forces, forces of soul-and-spirit, weave destiny from a different side. Again, if we are capable of spiritual insight, what leads us to human beings with whom we have jointly accomplished something in past lives, is experienced to begin with as if it were hidden in dark, mysterious night. Then, when we actually meet the person in question and allow the impression he makes to affect us, the Sun and the bright light of day seem to take the place of the mysterious night. That is indeed what happens spiritually: in the case of two people who have been karmically connected for long ages, not only the past but the present and the future as well are glimpsed and the weaving of destiny

continues. The spiritual influences of the Sun make themselves felt.

But even in the case of those who have shared no experiences in earlier earthly lives, this spiritual element of the Sun weaves in their destinies both in the present and in the future. If, with the insight of Initiation, we meet someone with whom we have had no joint experiences in earlier lives but whom we are meeting now for the first time, we should see no shadowy pictures of earthly lives behind him. We should see instead, Beings of the higher Hierarchies, Beings of a rank not yet attained by man. To the insight of Initiation there is a great difference between meeting someone with whom we have already been connected in the past and someone we meet for the first time. If we had often been together with him, his earlier lives rise up in a picture behind him. If we had never met before, Beings of the next higher Hierarchy appear in his background, Beings who come down to us on Earth together with the rays of the Sun. Just as the Moon Beings weave into our astral body the karma that is *past*, so do these Sun Beings weave into our subconscious Ego-organisation what is to take place after our first meeting with another human being here on Earth: this is the basis of our *future* karma. The present is all the time changing into the future; what

is now the present has for the preceding moment become the future.

The counterpart in the Cosmos of this course of man's evolution from the past to the future is to be seen in the passage of the Moon in the heavens, with the Sun either following or ahead. The relationship between past and future in the mysterious weaving of destiny in human life is the same as the relationship between Moon and Sun in their passage around the universe. If with Initiation-knowledge, when you meet someone you say to yourself with deep feeling that what the Moon Beings have inscribed in his astral body belongs to you just as it does to him and that by its means you have been led to him, when you meet someone for the very first time you will feel that Angels and Archangels stand behind him. Both experiences point to the future. There are endless ways in which destiny may be fulfilled.

If you learn how to contemplate the cosmic expanse in this way, Moon and Sun are revealed as the two gates into the spiritual world. You will realise then that what is part of the earthly, physical environment lives for the moment in your physical body; what is present in the wide etheric spheres where the stars are to be seen, lives in your etheric body. But when you look up

to the Moon or the Sun, you will know that you are looking at what is present, not in your physical or your etheric body, but in your astral body, and gives power to your Ego. Through the Moon existence you are led out of the physical and etheric worlds into the spiritual world. In the same way, when you look up at the Sun, you will recognise that through its forces of spirit-and-soul you are being led through a gate to a world akin to your own Ego — not akin to your physical and etheric bodies but to your Ego. The Ego enables you to take your place in the world as a conscious being, accompanied by the destiny woven into your life as necessity and to which you conform because of your particular physical aptitudes, temperament or character, all of which are merely means of expression for your karma. In everything of which the poet says: “this you must be, you cannot escape from yourself” — in all this the past Moon existence is living on. And the Sun existence is working whenever you are conscious of freedom of choice.

Thus, spiritually considered, nature-existence and moral existence interweave. Nature does not exist in isolation with its rigid necessities on the one side and, on the other side, soul-and-spirit unable to enter into any real relationship with it and existing only as a remote moral order. There is no such contrast, for it is

possible, with spiritual insight, to find in the phenomena of nature the morality that is alive within us. True, it is necessary here to pass beyond the ordinary phenomena of nature to what is revealed by the spiritual Sun-and Moon-existence.

Insight of this kind makes it possible for us to ascend from a nature-existence to existence as beings of soul-and-spirit. It is also possible — although not with ordinary consciousness — to perceive in our earthly or cosmic environment the causes of illnesses which may befall us. In itself our organism is healthy, for it is born out of its healthy Ego, its healthy astral body and also out of a healthy etheric world. If someone falls ill here on Earth it can only be because something approaches him from outside which owing to his inherent constitution he is not able completely to transform. You can see that this is so from very simple examples. Suppose you are in a warm or a cold room. You must not allow the heat or cold to pass through you as it might pass through a piece of wood or stone. You absorb and convert the external warmth which acts merely as a stimulus; you yourself generate in your own organism the warmth you have within you. If you cannot do this, if you allow the environment to treat you as it treats a stick or stone, if external warmth penetrates into you and you are

unable to transform it, you will immediately catch cold. Man cannot take anything from the environment of the Earth into himself without transforming it — this also applies to the food he eats. He transforms what he eats just as he transforms everything in the environment and it is a scientific fantasy to believe otherwise. If no transformation is achieved he will fall ill. Here lies the physical cause of illness; but illness can also be connected with destiny.

If we limit our thoughts to this present earthly life, to the period, let us say, between some year in the nineteenth or twentieth century and to-day, 6th February 1924, we shall agree that if something from the environment is going to make us ill, it will have to exert a very powerful influence. If something that comes from outside — cold or heat, or perhaps noxious air — is to make us ill, it will need to be very forceful. If we merely look at a deadly nightshade it will not poison us; nor if the noxious atmosphere is sufficiently far away will it poison us. In short, if the influence from outside affects only the life of soul, it does not make us ill. To achieve that, a much more powerful influence is needed.

But now consider the following — Large numbers of people nowadays are out-and-out materialists and

believe only in material influences from the environment But actually there are many ways in which they cannot be materialists, for instance, in some of their bodily needs: they cannot avoid eating what is spiritual in plants or of the nature of soul in animals. If they were honest and consistent materialists in the matter of their food they would eat nothing but stones — nothing but inorganic, lifeless matter. In their life of soul the only concepts and ideas they will accept are concerned with the lifeless and this becomes a force leading to illness in the following incarnation. The impressions make their way into the soul and are transformed into forces which can become physically active. The karmic aspect of illness is carried over from previous earthly lives into our present life, because we admitted into ourselves in earlier incarnations elements which are not fitting for human beings; we have become susceptible to illness. These ideas and impressions work in this present life as potent causes of illness. Something that may have been no more than an idea or inner experience of the soul in one earthly life is transformed in the period we live through between death and rebirth into forces that work physically. We have within us much that works physically, whereas in an earlier life it was purely of the nature of soul. Thus we have to regard illness as a matter of destiny and we must not

succumb to the superstition that illnesses can be cured by spiritual means alone. Means that take effect physically are necessary. But if we fully understand the facts and realise that what is physically active in the present life is to be traced back to something that was active in the life of soul in earlier lives, we shall recognise also that by turning our thoughts away from what was imperfect towards what is perfect in man, we shall carry over in a healthy form into our next life what would otherwise be a cause of illness. For instance, if we are convinced that an illness has resulted from a materialistic life of soul in a previous incarnation, we may be sure that we can only rid ourselves of the illness by a treatment based upon spiritual views and ideas. And these are found in Anthroposophy — which is not theory but directly related to life, cultivating the insight and feeling that life requires.

If we can contemplate the Cosmos and the whole environment of the Earth in the light streaming from Anthroposophy when rightly cultivated, Moon and Sun seem intimately related to us; we see in them the cosmic pictures of our own past and our own future. We become intensely conscious of our relationship with the whole Cosmos; we see our past and future weaving in our destiny; in Sun and Moon we see

world-destiny revealing itself. We shall feel in our past something that takes its place beside our present and our future as the Moon takes its place in the Cosmos beside the Sun. Our reverence and devotion, our capacity for sacrifice for the sake of the whole Cosmos will be enhanced when we learn how to expand our own existence into cosmic existence and thus experience the kinship between what lives in us and weaves in the universe.

One of the tasks Anthroposophy sets itself is to help human beings to establish union with the universe in this way. And I hope that one of the results of our meeting here in such large numbers will be that we shall identify ourselves more and more with this task of Anthroposophy which is to give added depth not only to the thoughts of men but also to their hearts and feelings. This was indeed the purpose of the Christmas Foundation Meeting. That Meeting made it clear that if the Anthroposophical Society is to develop the right kind of activity it must abandon the paths it has been taking during these last ten years; it must cease to concern itself with externalities, must penetrate to inner, spiritual realities. The School of Spiritual Science to be established in Dornach must have this esoteric character, and so must the Society as a whole in order to maintain the spiritual life it

needs. It must throw off the tendency that has threatened it during the last ten years — the tendency to be absorbed in externalities.

What has actually been happening during these ten years and was happening even before then? Here is an example. A very strong opposition — it is particularly active just now — has been able to refer to lecture-courses and transcripts of lectures which are not available to the general public. As you know, people wished to possess these lecture-courses and transcripts and it was a matter of meeting these wishes, although it was obvious that this was the very way to give the opposition the ammunition it needed. We live in times when secrecy is quite out of the question. Therefore at the Christmas Meeting the Society was declared to be a public institution. But that does not in any way gainsay the fact that on the other side it becomes all the more esoteric. The leadership of the Society must be more and more consciously anthroposophical. It was for this reason that when we were framing our Statutes, our procedure differed entirely from what is customary. Statutes usually start by laying down some basic principle. — We had such Statutes in the Theosophical Society: the establishment of a universal brotherhood of mankind; the recognition of unity in religions, and

so on. As I have often said, instead of all this we must emphasise the reality which the Anthroposophical Society is able to establish. This was in fact done at the Christmas Meeting. There was no mention of abstract principles but it was declared that in Dornach there is something that is living reality. Whoever sees justification in what is thus actively alive in Dornach is entitled to join the Society. The life of the Society is not conditioned by abstractions usually known as ‘Statutes;’ our so-called ‘Statutes’ are an account of what exists in Dornach and what we aim to do from there. The Society is to have an Executive which acts and which in its actions and in the initiatives it takes has a clear view of what forms and constitutes it. Thus we have tried to replace abstractions by the genuinely human element and to assert this even in the ‘Statutes.’ This is the one and only possibility of life for a Society that is to be an organ for the influx of spiritual power into the world.

Let me put it like this. — The Executive created in Dornach at Christmas is based upon a hypothetical assumption. If the Society is willing to accept what it does, it will be an Executive in the real sense; if the Society is unwilling, then the Executive will amount to nothing; it can be accepted only as the centre of living activity. I can give no more than brief indications at

the moment — everything else will be clearly set forth in the News Sheet.

A real attempt was made through the Christmas Meeting to bring a new spirit into the Society, but it is essential that the nature of this new spirit shall be understood. It is not a spirit of abstractions but of living reality, a spirit which wants to speak not to the head but to the hearts of men. Thus as far as Anthroposophy is concerned, the Christmas Meeting was either everything or nothing. And it will be nothing if it has no real continuity, if it was merely a festive occasion which people found enjoyable, forgetting about it afterwards and remaining in the same old grooves. If that happens the Meeting will have no real content and nothing will stream back to it. The only content it can have is derived from the life in the various spheres, of the Society. It will become a reality only by virtue of what happens through its impulse in the life of the Anthroposophical Society. The Christmas Meeting becomes a reality only through its consequences and effects. A certain responsibility in the soul is involved merely when attention is directed to the Christmas Meeting — the responsibility to make it a reality; otherwise as a foundation it will withdraw from earthly existence and go the same way as the Moon Beings of which I have spoken to-day. In a

certain sense the impulse of the Christmas Foundation Meeting was actually in the world. Whether it will become effective in life depends upon whether its impulse continues.

The spiritual Foundation Stone of the Anthroposophical Society was laid in the hearts of every participant. We brought the Meeting to a formal conclusion, but actually it should never be closed, it should continue perpetually in the life of the Anthroposophical Society. For this reason I would ask you to take very seriously what you will find in the weekly News Sheet, and to consider everything that will become known to you by its means, not only as something reported or described but as actual reality. It cannot be expected that everything will be arranged at once and to begin with people will inevitably be asking, ‘How should this or that be done?’ One of the first steps will be that in the News Sheet you will find what I may call guiding lines in the form of aphorisms giving expression to anthroposophical truths on such themes as life, religion, art, and so forth. And then people in the different groups will be able to say: Here is a thought sent to us from Dornach as a guiding line; in addition to other business let us therefore concentrate on this thought.

In this way unity will develop among the various spheres of anthroposophical life within the Society. Many things will begin to flow through the Society as its life-blood, so that instead of merely speaking about unity the Society may be permeated by a common spiritual blood. Such was the aim of the Christmas Meeting. It could be felt then and its further effects will become apparent as time goes on.

Emphasis on this is particularly necessary here in Germany where the whole position is different from anywhere else. In other countries the opposition is not nearly as strong as it is here. If it crops up elsewhere one can usually see that it is imported from here, although there is a certain kind of opposition everywhere, especially in the vicinity of Dornach itself. All the same it is a special kind of opposition that faces us in Germany, a very tough opposition which works with systematic, fully conscious methods. It was a difficult decision to put someone who was practically lowest at the head of the Society but that is what actually happened. When the Anthroposophical Society was founded in 1912-13, I held no office in it; indeed I was not even a Member. Nor was I a Member afterwards. I have often emphasised this but it has been misunderstood. I wanted the Anthroposophical Society to have me only as teacher, as one who could

lead to the sources of anthroposophical life. The attempt had to be made in order to see what would come of it.

What has happened is that at the age when people usually retire, I have to make a beginning, for in fact I regard the Christmas Meeting as a beginning, a genuine beginning in life. And I would like you too to feel that we are at a beginning. If you feel like this then you may expect results from this beginning in which there are great possibilities. It is only from necessity that I have become a Member, in fact President of the Anthroposophical Society, and I sincerely hope that the significance of the Christmas Meeting will be realised. If this comes about it may perhaps be possible, as a result of this attempt, and with the cooperation of everyone with what will go out from Dornach, for genuine anthroposophical life to flow through the Society. In this spirit — and it is upon this spirit that everything in the Society will depend — I should like to respond most cordially to the welcome given me today by Dr. Kolisko, on the occasion of my first visit here since the Christmas Meeting. I should like to respond with equal warmth so that we may work together in the spirit of the Christmas Meeting in such a way that the impulse then given may never cease to be active among anthroposophists who

genuinely strive to understand what anthroposophical life means. The influence of the Dornach Meeting and the spirit we tried to invoke then will always be present if there is devotion and perceptive understanding among the Members.

Let us then work together, realising the deep significance of the Dornach Meeting. Let us never treat it with indifference but regard it as an impulse that penetrates deeply into our hearts. The Dornach Meeting will then have been much more than a festival week; it will be an impulse affecting the whole world and the destiny of man. And that is the right impulse for all anthroposophical work and activity.

Karmic Relationships, VI: Lecture V

The truth of repeated lives on Earth was once expressed in German literature in impressive words to which attention has often been called in the Anthroposophical Movement. At the height of his powers Lessing wrote his memorable treatise, *The Education of the Human Race*, at the end of which he declares his belief in repeated lives on Earth. In monumental sentences he declares that the historical development of humanity can be intelligible only on the assumption that the individual man passes through many lives on Earth and carries over into other epochs of evolution what may have been experienced and accomplished in an earlier epoch. In this connection, two facts only need be borne in mind: when attempts are made by historians to explain later events as the effects of earlier causes, all kinds of reasons are brought forward — the influence of ideas, of physical happenings, and so forth — in short, pure abstractions. The truth is that the same individuals who were living, let us say, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, lived in earlier epochs as well; they then absorbed what was happening around them or what was to be experienced from their fellow human beings, carried it

all through the gate of death into the spiritual world in which man lives between death and rebirth, and brought it down again with them into a new earthly life. They are therefore themselves the bearers of what has passed over from one epoch to another in the course of the evolution of humanity.

The past is forever being carried over to the future by individual men. This is the one fact that can fill the soul with a feeling of reverence when it is taken with due earnestness. And the other fact is that on reflection, all of us sitting here will be able to say: We ourselves have lived on the Earth many times and what we are to-day is the product of those previous lives. When we survey history and let it shed light upon our own experiences, the realisation that there are repeated lives on Earth may well imbue knowledge with a mood of reverence, and Lessing must certainly have experienced something of the kind when he wrote: “Why should not every individual man have existed more than once upon this world? Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest, because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the Schools had dissipated and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once?” [Translation by F. W. Robertson, 1872.] And he voices his consciousness of realities such as those indicated

above, in the monumental words: “Is not then all Eternity mine?”

The line of spiritual development which could have been introduced into German culture at that time through Lessing’s treatise, was broken. And in any case its continuance would certainly have been ridiculed by the mentality of the nineteenth century.

More than twenty years ago in Berlin, when we were beginning anthroposophical work within the framework of the Theosophical Society, it was announced on the programme of the meeting held in connection with the founding of what was then called the German Section of the Theosophical Society, that the title of one of the first lectures I proposed to give would be: “Practical Exercises for the Understanding of Karma” (*über praktische Karma-Übungen*). It was a matter at that time of introducing the idea of karma with such forcefulness that it could have become one of the *leitmotifs* in the development of the Anthroposophical Movement. But when I spoke about what I meant by this title to one or two well-known members of the old Theosophical Society who had come over to Berlin, there was general opposition. Such a subject was considered to be quite impossible. And as a matter of fact — although I am not

suggesting that these people were right — it would have been premature at that time to speak to wider circles about these intimate esoteric truths. If one wishes to avoid abstract generalisations and to speak in a concrete way about karma and its significance in the historical life of mankind, this is not possible without touching upon matters of a deeply esoteric nature and making use of the concepts of esotericism. Hence in a certain respect everything in the way of knowledge that has since been developed in the Anthroposophical Society was a necessary preparation, because in the days to which I have referred the members of this Society were not sufficiently mature.

But sooner or later the time must come when it is possible to speak concretely of the truths of karma and their connection with the evolution of humanity. If we were to wait any longer this would be a grave defect on the part of the Anthroposophical Society. Hence one of the intentions expressed at the Christmas Foundation Meeting at the Goetheanum was to the effect that communication of the findings of genuine spiritual investigation into these more intimate questions of the evolution of humanity should no longer be withheld. And in line with this, the Anthroposophical Movement will in future be attentive

to what the spiritual Beings desire, not to what timidity and caution regard as inopportune or untimely.

In this connection the Christmas Meeting at the Goetheanum was not only of qualitative significance for the Anthroposophical Movement but something that was to mark the beginning of deeper and more intensive anthroposophical work. And it is from this point of view — which must also become a point of view of the whole Movement — that I shall speak to you to-day.

We witness great happenings in history and are aware that the keynotes in certain domains of life are set by particular personalities. It should be obvious to us that some historic personality who not so long ago was the inaugurator of the kind of thinking under the influence of which we are still living to-day, can only be understood — as the historical aspect in general can only be understood — when anthroposophical investigation penetrates into earlier incarnations of such personalities. This leads to something else as well. By observing personalities of whom history tells we become aware of threads of destiny running through their different lives on Earth and the light

thus shed upon karma helps to make our own personal destiny intelligible. This is of very great importance.

There must be no sensationalism in the study of karma; the sole purpose of such study must be to illumine the circumstances of human life and the experiences of individual human souls. We see, for example, that particularly in the last two thirds of the nineteenth century, a materialistic attitude of soul became general; in certain respects this attitude continued on into the twentieth century and has helped to produce the chaos and confusion prevailing in culture and civilisation to-day. There is a radical difference between the trend that was perceptible — above all in German spiritual life — after the close of the first third of the nineteenth century and the earlier character of this spiritual life. Perceiving this difference, we naturally ask about its origin. In the last two thirds of the nineteenth century there are men who cannot fail to interest us, whose individualities we feel urged to trace back to their earlier lives on Earth.

The seer who is able to carry out such investigations is led back, to begin with, not to Christian but to non-Christian incarnations. It is natural here — for it tallies approximately with the indications given of the length of the intervals between successive lives on Earth —

to go back to the very widespread spiritual movement of Mohammedanism, or Arabism, which arose about half a millennium after the founding of Christianity. Starting from Asia, Christianity spread across to Spain and thence to all Western Europe, having had a slight influence upon civilisation in North Africa; it also spread across Eastern and Middle Europe, but in its expansion was flanked, as it were, by Arabism which, with the impulse of Mohammedanism active within it, forced its way on the one side through Asia Minor and on the other side through Africa across to Italy and Spain. And the many wars of which history tells bear witness to the bitter conflict waged between European civilisation and Arabism. Here again it is important to ask: What are the concrete facts underlying the evolution of the human soul?

We will now consider some of these concrete facts. For example: at the time when Charlemagne was ruling in very primitive conditions of civilisation in Europe, brilliant spiritual culture was being developed at the Court of Haroun al Raschid over in Asia. At this Court were gathered the greatest minds of that time, men of outstanding brilliance, whose souls were deeply imbued with oriental wisdom but who also combined with this wisdom the culture that had come over from Greece. The spiritual life cultivated at the

Court of Haroun al Raschid embraced Architecture, Astronomy (as it was then understood), Geography, Mathematics, Poetry, Chemistry, Medicine, and the most illustrious representatives of all these branches of learning living at that time had been brought together there.

Haroun al Raschid was an energetic and active patron, a personality who provided the foundations for a truly wonderful centre of culture in the eighth/ninth century A.D. And at this Court of Haroun al Raschid there was a remarkable personality, one who in the life spent at the Court would probably not have given the impression of being an Initiate. But he himself, as well as the Initiates, knew that in an earlier life on Earth he had been one of those who were most highly initiated. Thus in a later incarnation, at the Court of Haroun al Raschid, there lived a personality who did not appear outwardly as an Initiate but who had been an Initiate in an earlier life. The others at the Court had at least some knowledge of this nature of Initiation-life in days of antiquity. The personality of whom I am speaking was a magnificent organiser — as we should say nowadays, using a rather unworthy expression — of all the sciences and arts at the Court of Haroun al Raschid.

We know that Arabism in its external aspect spread under the impetus of Mohammedanism across Africa, Southern Europe, Spain and farther into Europe. We know too of the wars and conflicts that were waged. But the campaigns came to an end. It is usually considered that Arabism was driven out of Europe by battles such as those fought by Charles Martel, at Xeres de la Frontera. But there was a tremendously strong spiritual impulse in, Arabism, and the remarkable thing is that when it was outwardly beaten back as a political and belligerent power in Europe, the souls of eminent Arabists, when they had passed through the gate of death, were intensely concerned in the spiritual world with the question of how the influence of Arabism could be made effective in Europe. In the spiritual world the outer form of things is not of primary importance. Between two successive incarnations of an individuality there may be little outer resemblance; the significance lies in the inner nature and character. This is a difficult idea for our contemporaries to grasp. In an age when it can be held against a man that he once wrote not unfavourably about Haeckel and subsequently wrote in a different vein regarded by pedants as contradictory, [Dr. Steiner is here referring to criticisms of his own writings on the subject of Haeckel.] when such a lack of insight is in evidence,

there will be little understanding of how outwardly different individuals can be in two successive lives on Earth, although the same fundamental impulse is at work in both.

The development of the great Arabist souls between death and a new birth was such that in the spiritual world they remained connected with the impulse that had streamed from the East to the West; they remained connected with their own deeds. In the external world, civilisation advanced; forms of culture quite different from those characteristic of Arabism made their appearance. But the souls of individuals who had been eminent figures in Arabism came again to the Earth and without carrying over Arabism in its outer form, bore its inner impulses into a much later age. They appeared as the bearers of culture in the sphere of language, in the habits of thinking and feeling and in the impulses of will of a later age. But in the souls of these men the impulse of Arabism was working on, and it is not difficult to see that the stream of spiritual life dominating the last two thirds of the nineteenth century was deeply influenced by minds that were the product of Arabism.

Our gaze turns to the soul of Haroun al Raschid, passing in that life through the gate of death. Between

death and a new birth this soul continues to develop and appears again in the modern age in quite different conditions of civilisation. For the individuality of Haroun al Raschid appears in English spiritual life as *Lord Bacon of Verulam*. In the universality of Bacon's mind we have to see the rebirth of what Haroun al Raschid had achieved at his oriental Court in the eighth/ninth century. We know how intensely and profoundly European culture was influenced by Bacon and has continued to be so influenced. It is true to say that in scientific investigation and the scientific approach to things, men still think as he did. This of course cannot be said of every detail but it is true of the general trend of the age. If we contemplate the brilliant achievements of Haroun al Raschid and their influence upon the outer world, and then, having learnt through spiritual investigation that he appears again in Lord Bacon of Verulam, we think of the known course of Lord Bacon's life, we shall certainly find consistency, similarity — not in the external forms but in the inner trend of these two incarnations.

I spoke of a personality who lived at the Court of Haroun al Raschid and in an earlier incarnation had been an Initiate. It may well happen — I say this in parenthesis — that one who was an Initiate in bygone times does not, in a later life, give the impression of

having attained Initiation. When I speak again and again of a number of ancient Initiates, of teachers and priests in the Mysteries, you are bound to ask yourselves: Where are they to be found? Why are they not living among us at the present time? Now an individuality with great spiritual enlightenment in an earlier life can work in a later life only through the medium of the body and the education afforded by that later epoch. But for a long time now, the character of education has made it impossible for what once lived in these Initiate-souls to express itself. They are obliged to operate in quite different forms of life and only those endowed with a power of intimate observation are able to realise that men in whom the Initiate is not apparent in the later earthly life have nevertheless passed through lives during which they reached Initiation.

One of the most striking examples in this respect is *Garibaldi*, the hero of the freedom of Italy. The elemental forcefulness displayed in a truly remarkable life is in itself enough to indicate that this personality lived at a level transcending the conditions of the immediate earthly existence. He had been an Initiate in an earlier incarnation and became a political visionary — for that is what he must be called. In an earlier life he had been an Initiate, filled with impulses

of will which then, in the later life as Garibaldi, he brought to a head in the way that was possible for a man born in 1807. But think of the peculiar features of his earthly life. The starting-point for me was that I observed how Garibaldi's path of destiny in the nineteenth century was linked with three other men with whom he was connected and with whom he worked in a way that on the face of it is really not entirely comprehensible. In the depths of his nature Garibaldi was an intensely loyal Republican, yet he rejected everything that would have united Italy under the flag of a Republic. Convinced Republican though he was, he set out to establish the Empire, and moreover under Victor Emmanuel.

Occult investigation has now to concern itself with this enigma: How came it that Garibaldi was the one responsible for making Victor Emmanuel King of Italy? — for it was he, Garibaldi, who made him King. And then our vision falls on two other personalities: Cavour and Mazzini. The circumstances are remarkable. Garibaldi was born in 1807 and the others within the space of a few years. Garibaldi was born in Nice, Mazzini in Genoa, Cavour in Turin, Victor Emmanuel not far away. All of them were born within a small area.

A concrete starting-point is needed for researches into karma. It is not much help to know how clever a man is or what scientific knowledge he has acquired. Even if someone has written thirty novels in his life, this fact will not provide a starting-point for penetrating with vision into earlier lives on Earth. Whether a person limps or has a habit of blinking is much more important for investigation of an earlier incarnation. It is precisely by what seem to be insignificant features in life that the occultist is guided along the paths where light is shed from one earthly life into earlier incarnations.

And so a criterion for occult research in the case of Garibaldi was the way in which, in the nineteenth century, he established relations with the other three individuals. There was another criterion as well. Outwardly observed, Garibaldi was a man with a strong sense of concrete reality, one who stood firmly on his feet, mindful only of practical exigencies. But in this Garibaldi-life there were intimate phases, showing clearly that Garibaldi stood at a level above the conventional experiences of life. While still quite young he took part in many dangerous sea voyages on the Adriatic, was several times captured by pirates but on every occasion freed himself again by very hazardous means. It is also noteworthy that the first

time Garibaldi saw his name in print was when he read in a newspaper the announcement of his own death-sentence. This is a biographical incident that does not happen to everybody! The death sentence had been passed on account of his participation in a conspiracy, but it was never carried out. Garibaldi fled to South America and there led an adventurous life, rich in inner experiences and full of vital force.

How very little the ordinary conditions of earthly existence affected Garibaldi is shown, for example, by the way in which he contracted his first marriage — which for many decades was an exceedingly happy one. How he became acquainted with the woman he married is a strange story. He was on board ship, still some distance out at sea, and looking towards the land through a telescope he saw a woman standing there. He fell in love with her at once. Falling in love through a telescope is by no means an everyday occurrence and in such a case the ordinary bourgeois conditions of life mean nothing! What happened? Garibaldi steered at once to the land and met a man who was so taken with him that he invited him home to a meal. This man was the father of the girl he had seen through the telescope! A slight drawback was that Garibaldi spoke only Italian, she only Portuguese, but although neither knew the other’s language he

made her understand that they must unite for life. It turned out to be the happiest and also one of the most interesting marriages imaginable. She shared in all his undertakings and experiences in South America and once, when a report reached her that Garibaldi had been killed in one of the many fights for freedom, she searched every battlefield — as legend narrates of other women. She lifted every corpse in order to look at the face but finally discovered on her journeyings that her husband was still alive. During these adventures she gave birth to her first child who would have died from cold if she had not bound it with a sling around her neck and kept it warm against her breast. These are not ordinary circumstances and the companionship was anything but a conventional one in the bourgeois sense. Some time after the death of his wife, Garibaldi married again, this time in perfectly conventional circumstances. But this marriage — which had not been arranged through a telescope — lasted no longer than a day! These happenings and similar features of Garibaldi's life are clear evidence that there was something quite out of the common about him.

Spiritual vision revealed to me that in an earlier incarnation [See *Karmic Relationships: Esoteric Studies - Volume I*, p.194 (lecture XII).] in the Christian

era, this personality had been an Irish Initiate; he had come over with a mission from Ireland to Alsace where he taught in a centre of the Mysteries and where he had as pupils those individualities who were born later on in approximately the same period and in the same region as he. Now in various Mysteries where Initiation was attained there was a law according to which the connection of certain pupils with the teacher must be so close and strong that the teacher might not desert them when circumstances brought them together in a later life. Garibaldi was bound to feel a very strong tie with the individuality of Victor Emmanuel because the latter had been his pupil in an earlier Initiation-life. In such a case, theories are of no account. In a later life what is of real importance is not any external undertaking, but obedience, even if an unconscious obedience, to that inner law by which men are brought together in accordance with impulses working in the intimate processes of historical evolution.

The whole of Garibaldi’s life indicates how the attainments of one who was an Initiate in a previous life are obliged to express themselves in a later incarnation because the bodily constitution and the education provided in a given century do not make it possible for such a personality to appear outwardly as an Initiate.

The same applies in the case of the personality who lived at the Court of Haroun al Raschid and who, when he had gone through the gate of death, was bound to take a different path from that of Haroun al Raschid himself. This personality was connected in the very depths of his soul with all the mysteries of Initiation he had received from oriental wisdom. He could not follow the path that was taken, more with an eye to outer renown, by Haroun al Raschid. He was obliged to take a different path. These paths led to reincarnation in a later epoch when the two individualities worked in the currents of civilisation and culture that were under their own influence — the influence, that is to say, of Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor. The soul of this Counsellor appeared again as *Amos Comenius*, who again was not able to bring the Initiation-principle to outward manifestation but whose forceful and effective intervention in the world of education in the age that is also the age of Bacon, shows that profound and significant impulses were alive in him. And so we see how after his life at the Court of Haroun al Raschid, the soul who has now become Amos Comenius is reincarnated with a more inward vocation; we see how Haroun al Raschid himself reincarnates; and we see how in these personalities, civilisations, cultures, flow together. If we contemplate the spiritual life of Europe as it developed particularly in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries, we shall everywhere find Arabism in its new forms. In everything that has been influenced by Bacon, Arabism is present in a more outwardly brilliant form. In everything that has been influenced by Amos Comenius, the deep inwardness of oriental wisdom can be perceived.

What I am telling you is not a made-up story. These things are not discovered by speculation but only by uniting oneself inwardly with the spirit-entities concerned and by means of inspired investigation seeking the way from the one earthly life into the other. Through the incarnation of souls in repeated lives a great deal has been brought over from Arabism into the modern age. What is all-important is that the character and purpose of such investigation shall not be misunderstood. I told you that it is not a question of following clues that in materialistic life would usually be considered significant. Nothing much will be discovered by so doing. — I will give you an example.

I had a teacher — I have also spoken of him in my autobiography — who was a really excellent geometrician. At a certain period in my fife he began to interest me very deeply. There was something absolutely original about him, a one-sidedness that amounted almost to genius; he had other

characteristics as well, but his geometrical talent provided no pointer to his earlier incarnation. This really first-class constructive geometrician had a certain external peculiarity — a club-foot. Now investigations which lead over from one incarnation into another very often reveal that everything connected in the one incarnation with the development of the legs is connected, in another life, with the development of the head. A remarkable metamorphosis takes place of the inner forces which in one life are those of the limb-system and in another, those of the head-system.

My teacher’s club-foot became for me the starting-point of occult investigation. And what transpired? The vision that was focused upon this defect led me to another personality who also had a club-foot namely, *Lord Byron*. I now knew: this has to do with reincarnations connected in some way with each other. And it turned out that in a previous incarnation there was something in the souls of both these men that had led them to common action, although in their last incarnation, as far as their earthly activity was concerned, they were not actually, but almost, contemporaries. I stress the point here that I am not dealing with incarnations as women because in past epochs life in a man’s body was more important.

Incarnations as women are only now beginning to be of importance, although in the future it will be of very special interest to take account of them. In considering many historical personalities, however, one often omits intervening incarnations as women. — You must not conclude from this that there have been no such incarnations, but I am speaking now of aspects which lead back first and foremost to previous incarnations as men. — And so through these two personalities whose connection with each other I had perceived, I was led back to a time — it was either in the tenth or eleventh century A.D. but I have not been able to determine this exactly — when they had lived in the East of Europe, in regions that are now part of modern Russia. They were comrades. At that time the legend of the Palladium and its changing whereabouts in the world had already reached the ears of a few. — You know, perhaps, that the Palladium was regarded as a holy treasure upon which the fortunes of civilisation depended. According to the legend, this Palladium was first in Troy, then in Rome and was then transferred with pomp and splendour to Constantinople by Constantine the Great, who caused a pillar to be erected over it for his own glorification. At the top of this pillar was a statue of Apollo. In a chaplet were pieces of wood which Constantine had caused to be brought from the Cross of Christ.

Everything was done with an eye to his own glorification. The legend related that the Palladium would at some time be carried northwards, whither the civilisation centred in Constantinople would then be transplanted. — This legend came to the ears of the two comrades of whom I am speaking and they were seized with enthusiasm to obtain possession of the Palladium in Constantinople. They did not succeed but they embarked on many adventurous undertakings with the aim of removing this holy treasure to the North. Especially in the case of the one who was subsequently reincarnated in the West as Byron, we see how his enthusiasm for the cause of freedom was a karmic continuation of the search for the Palladium in the earlier life. And the same spiritual configuration was to be seen in the intimate impression made by my geometry teacher upon those who knew him: here was a sense of freedom in the domain of science.

And so the paths led from details of secondary importance — in this case the club-foot — to earlier incarnations of the personalities in question. When it is a matter of speaking of the karmas of individuals one must always have an eye for the inner configuration of life.

Let me give one more example. — In the eighth/ninth century A.D., in the region that we should today call the North East of France, there lived a personality who in those days would have been considered a well-to-do landowner. But he was adventurous and went out on predatory expeditions in the neighbouring provinces. Incredible as it seems today, such things as the following did happen in those times. — He would leave his house and estate and wage campaigns sometimes more, sometimes less successfully in the neighbouring districts. On returning from one of these expeditions he found that he had been robbed of his property; another man was in possession and he had so many soldiers and weapons that the property could not be wrested from him by its rightful owner. There was no place to which the latter could go and he became a serf — as it would have been said later on — of the one who had dispossessed him. And so a strange relationship developed between these two men. The former owner of the estate was obliged to reverse his position. The property that had once been his now belonged to someone else and he himself was in the position previously occupied by the new owner. He (the former owner) and like-minded companions would hold all kinds of meetings — as we should call such gatherings nowadays — in the neighbouring forests by night,

voicing vehement resentment against the one who had taken possession of the property and against conditions where such things were tolerated. The intense resentment and the things that were said at that time as an expression of it are an interesting study.

I was able to follow the paths taken by these two men who passed through the gate of death in the ninth century and were born again in the nineteenth. The one who had been an owner of property of which he was afterwards dispossessed, appeared as *Karl Marx*, the founder of socialism in the nineteenth century. However greatly the outer circumstances differ, speculation leads nowhere. But by following certain underlying currents we find in the dispossessed landowner of the ninth century the soul of Karl Marx in the nineteenth. The one who had persecuted and abased him so cruelly in that earlier century became his friend *Friedrich Engels*. There is no question of sensationalism here but of understanding life and history from the concatenation of circumstances in earthly existence.

Such matters must be taken with deep earnestness, unmixed with any trace of sensationalism. In this example we have an illustration of European spiritual

life, but it was into this spiritual life that Arabist trends were inculcated. In the modern age too, a great deal of Arabism will be found — but in a quite different form.

Now a predecessor of Haroun al Raschid, one of the earliest successors of the Prophet Mohammed in the seventh century A.D. was *Muawiyah*. He was a remarkable personality who longed to make conquests in the West but achieved little; his inner longing for the West could not find fulfilment, but he was still aware of the urge towards the West when he passed through the gate of death, and this impulse continued through his life between death and a new birth. Then this individuality of one of the Prophet's earliest successors appeared again, exercising a dominant influence upon the conditions prevailing in the twentieth century. Before the Christmas Foundation Meeting I had spoken of many things that are confirmed by what can be known about the repeated lives of a certain personality. People understood little of what I said on those occasions, for the power of conviction with which these utterances were made came ultimately from the observation of karmic relationships through many lives on Earth. Muawiyah appeared again in our age as *Woodrow Wilson*, who carried Arabist abstraction in its most radical form into external civilisation. In Woodrow Wilson there

appeared an individuality who brought Arabism to very strong expression in our time, particularly in the famous Fourteen Points. The calamities for which Woodrow Wilson was responsible can best be studied by comparing the actual phrasing of those Fourteen Joints with certain passages in the Koran. You will then find that a great deal becomes intelligible and you will discover remarkable things once you have knowledge of the true circumstances.

The fact is, my dear friends, that the study of history to-day can be satisfactory from the human point of view only when the concrete phenomena of repeated lives on Earth are taken seriously, together with the perception of karma and the inner connections in the individual earthly lives of men. Since the Anthroposophical Society has for two decades been prepared for what ought now to be brought about under the influence of the Christmas Foundation Meeting, the “Practical Exercises for the Understanding of Karma” that were announced in 1902 when the German Section of the Theosophical Society was founded, may surely be put into practice today with greater and greater thoroughness. These exercises, devoid of all sensationalism, should form part of our anthroposophical life, becoming the foundation for greater and stronger impulses that

must be at work within the Anthroposophical Society. What has now been said ought also to be regarded as an expression of the fact that esotericism must stream through the Anthroposophical Movement which is now embodied in the Anthroposophical Society. But let us also realise with what deep earnestness these things must be studied. If this earnestness is present we shall be carrying farther the threads that were beginning to be woven when, at the end of his treatise on *The Education of the Human Race*, Lessing drew attention to the fact of repeated lives on Earth. For out of a deeper, more intimate study of man and of his destiny, humanity must come to realise that through Spiritual Science we gaze into the true being of man, the being who, having knowledge of his own nature can utter the words: “Is not then all Eternity mine?” But the expression of this Eternity in the concrete facts of karma and of destiny in the historical life of mankind must be recognised and known.

Karmic Relationships, VI: Lecture VI

On the last occasion, during our Waldorf School Conference, I spoke to you about karmic connections in the evolution of humanity, and to-day I want to say something more on the same subject. I shall begin with matters of which you already have some knowledge and then pass on to others less familiar to you.

When the human being passes through the gate of death, his ether-body dissolves away into the Cosmos when the physical body has been laid aside at the moment of death itself. To-day we shall not be studying this first stage after death, when the ether-body is dissolving, but the stage which follows. This can best be understood by thinking, to begin with, of the earthly life between birth and death. This earthly life runs its course in two sharply different conditions: waking and sleeping. You know from Anthroposophy that during the waking state the four members — physical body, ether-body, astral body and Ego — interpenetrate, mutually stimulating and sustaining their several functions. But in sleep the physical body and etheric body remain in the bed, leading temporarily a plant-like existence, while the astral

body and Ego-organisation live independently in the spiritual world, separated from the physical and etheric bodies. We know from ordinary experience that when we are recollecting our earthly life, our remembrances are falsified in a certain sense. For when we look back with ordinary consciousness over our life, this retrospect seems to be a continuous, onward flowing stream, one event proceeding from another consecutively, and as a rule we ignore the fact that the stream of our memories is continually interrupted by the nights. In remembrance, therefore, there is a sequence of day-night-day-night; a period of clear consciousness passes over into one of darkness and this again into one of light. With the exception of dreams which arise from sleep, the part of earthly life which is spent in sleep remains, for the most part, unconscious. Generally speaking, this constitutes a third of the earthly life — if a man is not an abnormally long sleeper. Even taking into consideration the many more hours a child spends in sleep, it will be found that sleep occupies about a third of the time of life on the Earth.

We may ask: What are the Ego-organisation and astral body doing during the period of sleep? They are, it is true, in the spiritual world. But they have no awareness in that world and with the exception of

dreams they remain unconscious. Moreover if the human being — constituted as he is on Earth with his ordinary consciousness — were always to have awareness during sleep he would go astray in one direction or another. A man of a more Ahrimanic disposition would go about during the day as if in a swoon, as if his consciousness had suffered a kind of paralysis; a man of a more Luciferic disposition would go about in a state of confused consciousness, with his thoughts and feelings in a perpetual jumble. Generally speaking, the human being is protected by the power known as the “Guardian of the Threshold” from becoming aware of the spiritual world around him during sleep.

When a man has passed through the gate of death, however, and after the first few days has laid aside the etheric body, he starts an existence which flows backwards, beginning with the day of death, passing then to the day before that, and so on through the whole of his life, in the direction from death to birth. But he lives backwards through the *nights* — the periods of sleep — not through the days. Hence the time during which his life is lived through in this backward order amounts to about one third of the span of his earthly life. If a man dies at the age of sixty, this backward ‘journey’ lasts about twenty

years, that is to say, this other life is passed through three times as quickly as the life on Earth. Between death and a new birth we review the nights during which — unconsciously of course — pictures were produced which are in a sense negative images of the earthly life.

If man were not protected by the Guardian of the Threshold his experiences every night would be unendurable and bring about the consequences to which I have referred. If, for instance, he had done someone a wrong, he would feel during sleep as if he were transposed into the other man, experiencing what this other man had felt as a result of the wrong done to him. For the reason given there is no such experience during sleep. But after death, during the period referred to, it comes with very great intensity. We live backwards through our earthly life and through all the compensatory experiences for what we have done or failed to do. How comes it that we are able to live through these compensatory experiences?

In order to answer this question, attention must be called to a cosmic event. During the course of the Earth’s evolution, the Moon — which was originally part of the Earth — separated and emerged from the Earth to lead an independent physical existence.

Some time after the physical substances of the Moon separated from the Earth, the ancient primeval Teachers of humanity departed to the Moon. While they were on the Earth, these primeval Teachers had not incarnated in physical bodies, but only in etheric bodies. Hence the nature of their influence upon human beings was imaginative, inspirational. And all the wonderful teachings which were given in a more poetic form and contained in legends and sagas, originated in a majestic, primeval wisdom imparted by these ancient Teachers on the Earth. But the essential nature of these Teachers enabled them to withdraw to the Moon which has since been their habitation.

When the human being passes through the gate of death, he moves in very truth through the Cosmos; his being expands and expands. He passes first into the Moon sphere and encounters these great primeval Teachers as they now are. They preserve as it were a naively instinctive, innocent state of the human race. Before men succumbed to the possibility of doing evil, these primeval Teachers were present on the Earth. They take into themselves what is inscribed by us into the Akashic Chronicle during the nights we live through during our existence on Earth. They permeate it with their own being and thus make it possible for us, during the first third of our life after death when

we are living through the events of earthly existence in backward order, to experience it all with greater intensity than we experienced it on Earth. Events in earthly life jolt us, impel and drive us, but those whose spiritual vision is able to witness what a dead man lives through in these first decades after his death know well that through the magical power of the great Teachers who have established their colony on the Moon, the experiences of yonder life have an intensity infinitely greater and more vivid than those of earthly life. We actually undergo all this. Suppose you once gave someone a box on the ears: after death you do not experience the feeling of satisfaction or perhaps of anger or malice occasioned in you by your action, but you are then *within* the other man, you experience the pain and the shock that were caused to him. You feel exactly what your action made him feel. The experience of living through such events with a dead man is deeply moving — one cannot say ‘shattering.’

Let me give you an example here. Most of you will remember that among the characters in my Mystery Plays, I have depicted that of Strader. As in the case of most of the characters in the Plays, the figure of Strader is drawn from actual life. There was a man whose life was almost exactly similar to that of Strader as depicted in the Plays. You can well imagine that I

was very much interested in this personality during his physical life on Earth. He died in the year 1912, and my interest in his experiences after death began from then onwards. He had ultimately become a writer on the subject of rationalistic theology, and everything he had experienced on the Earth became infinitely more intense as he himself was experiencing the effect of his books and his rationalism. After I had shared for some time in what he was experiencing, I found it impossible to continue the character of Strader in the Plays and he dies because my interest in his earthly life was no longer there; it was eliminated by the intensity of interest in what he was experiencing after death.

An incident connected with this was that certain friends interested themselves in the writings left by the original of Strader and wanted to bring them to me. I simply could not take any interest in the matter and had to ignore it, for the simple reason that interest in the dead is so much stronger and eliminates everything else. By this I merely want to indicate that the experiences of a man after death while living through his life in backward order are much more intense than they were during his earthly existence. Earthly life is almost like a dream as compared with this other experience. It is an experience in negative,

an experience of the consequences in the other person of what we have done and left undone. Hence it should not be described as altogether terrible. But at any rate a man must come to realise which of his deeds, his thoughts, his feelings, were just and which were not.

You can imagine that it is in this state of existence that the first seed of karma is formed. For when the human being realises what actually happens between death and a new birth, his judgement differs from judgement as it is on Earth. — I may already have mentioned that many years ago I met a lady who had listened to a conversation that had taken place in her presence on the subject of repeated earthly lives. She said that one life was enough for her, that she had no desire at all for any others, and she protested vehemently against the possibility of having to return again and again. I was obliged to say to her at the time: ‘Yes, it may be that this is your opinion here on Earth; but that is not the point. What matters is the judgement that is made between death and a new birth.’ As long as she was with us, she realised this, but on her travels afterwards she sent me a postcard saying that after all she did not admit that there are many earthly lives!

When the human being is undergoing these intensified experiences after death, he makes a resolve that may be expressed as follows: Owing to this and that, you have become imperfect, you are an inferior human being; and you must make compensation! Thereby the plan of karma is laid down. And such resolutions in the spiritual world between death and a new birth are *realities*. Just as here on Earth it is a reality that you burn yourself if you put your finger into a flame, so it is a reality in the spiritual world when you form a resolution. And you do most assuredly form it!

All these experiences are lived through in the Moon sphere. Passing through the following spheres of Mercury and Venus, man gradually approaches the Sun sphere. The Mercury sphere and the Venus sphere form the transition into the Sun sphere. But entry into the Sun sphere would not be possible if the whole burden of the evil laid upon the soul in the Moon sphere had still to be taken in tow. The Cosmos therefore provides that when the human being leaves the Moon sphere, the evil in him stays behind; it waits until he returns and is again passing through the Moon sphere. But as the human being is one with his deeds, he leaves much of himself behind. If I have done evil on the Earth, this simply makes me an inferior being;

in passing through the Moon sphere I lose part of myself, leave it behind. A man who had been an out-and-out villain, who had never once done anything good — but after all, nobody like this really exists — such a man would be left behind in his entirety in the Moon sphere. But, as I say, nobody like this exists … human beings do make progress.

With less or more qualities or defects, the human being passes, at first, into the Mercury sphere. Here too, between death and a new birth, he undergoes particular experiences which are a preparation for his existence in the Sun sphere. In physical life on Earth, a man becomes ill in one way or another. In soul and spirit he must be completely healthy when he passes into the Sun sphere. Hence in the Mercury sphere the human being is freed from all the effects that illnesses have produced upon the soul. Therefore it is the case that true medicine can only be mastered when one is able to perceive how the dead are freed from illnesses in the Mercury sphere. This can teach us what must be done for human beings on the Earth to free them from illnesses. And so, in the times of the Mysteries and of instinctive clairvoyance, medicine was regarded as a revelation from the Mercury sphere through the Mysteries. Just think: What is a God to modern man? A God is a Being who can never be seen on the Earth.

This was not so in the days of instinctive clairvoyance. Mercury had his Mysteries. As you can read in the book, *Occult Science*, there were Mercury Mysteries. Indeed the Arch-High-Priest of the Mercury Mysteries was Mercury himself. This was brought about through a man being born whose spirit was then released by a super-human process in order to seek embodiment in another way. The body was there, and this body was used by the God Mercury in order to come to the Earth, that is to say, to reveal himself in the Mysteries. The Gods themselves were the teachers in the ancient Mysteries. The same applies to all the Gods of Greece; they were all on the Earth in this sense. The God Mercury taught men the art of medicine of which Hippocrates, later on, still preserved a tradition.

Then the human being enters into the Venus sphere where he becomes wholly aware of his incompleteness. But in the Venus sphere all that is incomplete in him is prepared for the Sun existence in which the longest period is spent. Man lives twice through the Sun sphere, but we need now speak only of the one period. He spends the longest period in the Sun existence where, to begin with, he is in the company of those souls with whom he has some kind of karmic connection and who are now, like himself, in the spiritual world. But he is also in the company of

the Beings of the higher Hierarchies: Angeloi, Archangeloi, Archai, Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes, and so on. What happens here? Inasmuch as the human being is fully conscious of his incompleteness, he works together with the Beings of the higher Hierarchies at the model and prototype of his next Earth existence. During the first half of the Sun existence he works more at the prototype of his future *physical* corporeality, and during the second half more at the prototype of his *moral nature* as it will be in his next Earth existence. This work that proceeds during the Sun existence is by no means as uniform as it seems when one has to describe it, but it is infinitely richer, more splendid and more mighty than anything that a man can experience on the Earth. On the Earth, man does not experience what is actually enclosed within his skin, but what is around him. During the Sun existence it is the exact opposite, for then man experiences everything that is within the Cosmos. Just as here on Earth we say: this is my stomach, so in yonder sphere we say: out there is my Venus. And as we say here: this is my heart, over yonder, we say: this is my Sun. The Beings of the universe become our organs. We ourselves are as the universe. While man is on Earth — I refer of course to a spiritual conception of man — he is merely filled by earthly substance. This inner world of the human being is in very truth more

all-embracing, more splendid than the Cosmos outside man on the Earth. On the Earth, man is not conscious of all that is concealed within his being. But it is much greater, much more majestic than anything he sees on Earth. And what thus lies concealed within him, is revealed to him during the Sun existence. Out of what is then his world, he forms and shapes his physical and moral nature for his next life on Earth. He also works at his karma. After having learnt during the first decades after death how he has to work, he proceeds to labour at his karma. The final touch, as it were, is not given until the evil he has done is encountered again during the second passage through the Moon sphere, and to the model and prototype is added the force which impels him into the karma of a new earthly life.

In order to have more precise insight into how karma is formed, we must think of the following. — Stars — what are they, in reality? Scientists speak of the stars as if they were orbs of burning gas or the like. It is by no means so! Suppose you were on the planet Venus. The Earth would then appear to you more or less as Venus appears to you now, and you would describe the Earth as you now describe Venus; you would estimate that on the Earth — which is the theatre of man’s existence — there are so and so many souls. But

wherever a star shines, there are souls! There are souls on the Moon: the souls of the great primeval Teachers, intermingled in a sense with the souls of the Angeloi. On Mercury there are the souls of the Archangeloi, among whom we live when we pass through the sphere of the Archangeloi. The God Mercury is an Archangelic Being. On Venus are the Archai. And upon the Sun are the Exusiai, Dynamis, Kyriotetes, in whose company man forms his karma. We must see in the shining stars the outer signs of colonies of Spirits in the Cosmos. Wherever a star is seen in the heavens, there — in that direction — is a colony of Spirits.

When the human being has lived through the Sun existence, he enters into the Mars sphere, the Jupiter sphere, the Saturn sphere. He has already, in the Sun sphere, begun to work at his karma. But as well as this — in order that he shall find the load of evil that belongs to him when, later on, he goes back through the Moon sphere, and in order that karma may be prepared in such a way that it can be fulfilled on Earth — he needs to live with the Spirits indwelling Mars, Jupiter and Saturn. Moreover when highly characteristic human destinies are being worked out, it is the case that the final stage of the development of karmic connections takes place in the Mars sphere, the Jupiter sphere or the Saturn sphere. Karma can, of

course, be worked out when the human being comes again into the Venus sphere, and also into the Mercury sphere. Between death and a new birth man works at his karma, together with the Beings of the planetary systems. And it is exceedingly interesting to investigate this.

Today the time has come to speak more openly, with greater freedom and frankness, of many spiritual facts. The Christmas Foundation Meeting at the Goetheanum was held in order to introduce this esoteric character which should now imbue the whole Anthroposophical Society. Therefore, when I was able to speak to you on the last occasion, I began to explain all kinds of karmic connections. Let it not be thought that one is delving with clumsy fingers into the life of man when attempts are made to speak of interesting human phenomena from the point of view of their karmic connections. For thereby the world becomes for the first time transparent, full of light — not poorer but richer, more splendid in content.

I should like to speak today about an individual who was incarnated about the second century A.D. in Rome, as it then was, and who with great sensitiveness of perception had witnessed the willing martyrdom suffered by the Christians in their efforts to

promulgate their cause in the Roman Empire. This individual had also witnessed the terrible injustices and the many forms of depravity and corruption which were so rife in the Roman Empire at that time. Numberless manifestations of Good and Evil were witnessed and experienced by this individual. With the methods of spiritual research which enable such happenings to be recognised, we find this individual drawn into the tumultuous happenings which at that time, during the second half of the second century A.D., were experienced in the Roman Empire in connection with the spread of Christianity. There is something extremely moving about this individual when the eye of spirit is directed upon him in the way I explained last time with reference to other individuals in their repeated earthly lives.

In this individual who lived to a very great age and who had witnessed so much Good in deeds of supreme sacrifice in the sphere of germinating Christianity, and so much that was evil and bad in Roman life at that time, there arose a kind of realisation which was also a question: Where is the balance, the mean? Is there only the wholly Good and the wholly Evil in the world?

With the consciousness of Imagination and Inspiration one can follow quite clearly how this

individual was subsequently reborn in the eleventh century, as a woman. The experiences undergone in the life as a woman levelled out the hard, steel-like angularity of soul which had developed during the Roman incarnation when he had reached a great age. This trait was softened and mellowed and became a faculty of inner, thoughtful contemplation of Good and Evil. This individual then came again to the Earth in the eighteenth century and was born as the German poet, *Friedrich Schiller*.

And now study Schiller's life and see how it develops, striving to find a middle condition, a balance, a mean. Schiller needed Goethe before he could get rid of all that had remained in him from the conviction that there is only Good, there is only Evil. Read Schiller's dramas, and you will understand them if you think of his earlier incarnation.

What circumstances lie behind Schiller's life and outlook? The experiences he had undergone in the Roman incarnation continued to be alive within him, but he had subsequently incarnated as a woman in the Middle Ages. And then, in his life between death and a new birth, it was in the Saturn sphere that the most significant development of his karma took place.

Initiation-knowledge, of the degree that can be attained only in advanced age, is necessary in order to understand the essential nature of the Saturn sphere. The question may be asked: How is it possible to acquire knowledge of life on the stars and the like? I have told you that when the human being reaches Imaginative consciousness, he beholds his whole life in a great tableau. But he also beholds it divided into epochs. When Inspiration is attained, and the emptied consciousness wipes out this tableau, something shines out of every such epoch. Instead of beholding his own life between birth and the seventh year, a man beholds, at this place in the life-tableau, the happenings of the Moon existence — he can look into these happenings. In the tableau of the second epoch which lies between the change of teeth and puberty, the Mercury existence shines through all the happenings. The events of the school period, seen as they are backwards in this tableau, lead into the Mercury existence. How aptly and truly were the functions assigned to the several planets in the days of instinctive wisdom on the Earth! Statistics reveal that the human being is most healthy, not in the years between birth and the change of teeth, nor after puberty, but during the school period as it is called (between the ages of seven and fourteen), because that is the time when Mercury works most strongly

into the human being in his Earth existence. In the tableau arising from the epoch stretching between puberty and about the twenty-first or twenty-second years, the processes and Beings belonging to Venus are seen. Again it was genius that ascribed to Venus the initial stages of the sex life. The Sun existence shines through the epoch lying between the ages of twenty-one and forty-two, the Mars existence through the epoch lying between the years forty-two and forty-nine; the Jupiter existence through the epoch from forty-nine to fifty-six; and the Saturn existence through the epoch from fifty-six to sixty-three. Truth to tell, even an Initiate cannot see the circumstances of life between death and a new birth in which Saturn plays a part, until he has passed the sixty-third year of his life. Before then it is possible to learn about this existence in many different ways; but in actual vision it is possible to behold these happenings and their connections only when one has passed the sixty-third year of life. So you will realise why it is that I am only now speaking of matters connected with the Saturn existence.

As I said, Schiller developed his karma above all in the sphere of Saturn. To behold this Saturn existence in the way I have indicated, causes great amazement, because it is so different from anything one can

experience on the Earth. In the consciousness of the Beings on Saturn there is only Past; there is no Present at all. But the Past is revealed in great majesty. Let me try to make a comparison with something that might happen on the Earth — it does *not* happen, but hypothetically it is possible. Imagine that you have no idea what you look like, you know only that you exist. You act, you do something — you do not see this at the time, you see it only when it has become the Past. You walk: you do not see your own steps or the movements you make; but immediately afterwards these movements change into a snowman — and you draw the whole movement after you when you look round and see what you have been doing! Such is the life of these strange Spirits upon Saturn. They are never aware of what they do out of an immediate resolve of the Present, but they perceive it only when it has become the Past. This is a difficult conception for the ordinary consciousness, but it is so nevertheless. Individualities like that of Schiller, who are also forming their karma, live in similar conditions of existence. Such individuals develop a wonderful vision of the Past. And so the soul of Schiller, before he was born in the year 1790, lived in the spiritual world with a majestic vision in retrospect of all the Past that was connected with his own karma. And then, on the Earth, this changed into the reaction: the vision of the

Past is now transformed into enthusiasm for ideals of the Future. Schiller's ideals of the Future arose from his activity in connection with his karma during his Saturn existence.

And now let us take another life. During an incarnation in Greece, a certain individual had had a great deal to do with Greek plastic art and also with the Platonic philosophy. As a young man he was filled with enthusiasm for plastic art which he was able to view with the eye of spirit, and his colossal artistic powers were able to translate into art what he perceived spiritually. After other incarnations had been lived through, we find this individuality developing his karma in the Jupiter sphere. The Jupiter Beings differ from the Saturn Beings. The Jupiter Beings are unlike the men of Earth. When a man of Earth wants to grow wise, he must undergo inner development, he must struggle, battle inwardly and overcome; through periods that are filled with active development the human being on Earth struggles to acquire an unpretentious form of wisdom. Not so the Jupiter Beings. They are not 'born' as earthly beings are born, they form themselves out of the Cosmos. Just as you can see a cloud taking shape, so do the Jupiter Beings form themselves in the etheric and astral worlds, out of the Cosmos. Neither do they die. They

interpenetrate one another, do not, as it were compete with each other for space. These Beings are, so to speak, wisdom that has become real and actual. Wisdom is innate in them; they cannot be other than wise. Just as we have circulating blood, so have the Jupiter Beings wisdom. It is their very nature. Among them too, karma can be shaped. The individuality of whom we are speaking, who lived through one of his most important earthly lives in ancient Greece, passed through the Jupiter sphere, came into contact with the wisdom of the Jupiter sphere where his karma was shaped, and was born again in the eighteenth century as *Goethe*. Such is the origin of the wonderful combination of Greek culture and wisdom that is present in Goethe.

When history is studied in this way, when we try to glean from the Mysteries and from secrets of the Cosmos what is happening on the Earth, I do not think that the Earth's history loses significance thereby. Prosaic professors may always be insisting that it is much more to the point to depict Goethe as the man he actually was in life, than to waft him away into a higher sphere! In richer epochs of evolution, when instinctive clairvoyance still survived, men spoke, openly as well, of how life in the heavens is revealed through human acts and human existence. In this

respect we must get away from that abstract mentality which makes us think we are mere worms looking upwards from the Earth, believing only what the astronomers and astro-physicists have to say about the stars. In our civilisation and culture, with all their heavy trials, it is urgently necessary to understand the battle that is being waged between men who strive for the Spirit in order to comprehend spiritual law in the Cosmos, and men who have no desire for such knowledge, who limit themselves to the Earth, not only in the sphere of natural science but also in what is called ‘cultural’ or ‘spiritual’ history at the universities where documents alone are studied — for documents too are records only of happenings in the physical, material world. A decision will most certainly have to be taken in the course of Earth-evolution. Either degeneration of the spiritual life will intensify, and an illness of which I have been speaking for years — even in public lectures — will become more and more widespread. Very little is said about it as yet in medical literature, but it will none the less exist in life — its name is *Dementia professoralia* (Academic dementia) — *or* the human being will have to unfold enthusiasm for knowledge of the Supersensible. And this will also lead him to realisation of the connection between the Cosmos and the life of man.

I want to give you a third and rather more complex example. In an earlier life on Earth, a certain individuality was incarnated in India, when India was already in decline, and in that incarnation assimilated much knowledge of a kind accessible to one with extremely poor physical sight. Such details must be studied, for, as I have often said, it is details which lead to perception of the real connections. This individuality lived through various other incarnations which were, however, less important than the characteristics developed in him in India, where his extremely poor sight allowed him to see the lotus flowers and all the blossoms only with blurred outlines. His whole vision was clouded, lacking in clarity. His knowledge of life was of the kind that is inevitable when sight is blurred and the deeper qualities of things unprobed. The karma of this individuality was developed in a complicated way. He unfolded in the Mars sphere, to begin with, qualities that made him into a regular squabbler in the spiritual world! He also worked a great deal at his karma in the Mercury sphere, developing qualities of wit, of satire. And, in the background of all this, picture to yourselves a non-European world. The individual in question tends to be reborn in Europe. He passes through the Mars sphere — battle; through the Mercury sphere — critical, subtle thinking and

perception. Having developed still other characteristic qualities in the Venus sphere — it is a particularly complex karma — and with the tendency to evade the physical, while at the same time strongly permeated with spirituality, this individual in the nineteenth century becomes *Heinrich Heine*.

Just try to realise the understanding that arises of every verse written by Heine, of the very language, words and form, when we know: this is, in reality, a product of the Mars sphere, the Venus sphere, the Mercury sphere. All of it really originates in the Cosmos. Karma is formed and fashioned in the Cosmos; it is lived out upon Earth.

And so, looking backwards upon the life-tableau of man, we perceive the Moon sphere, the Mercury sphere; from the 21st to the 42nd years the Sun sphere, then the Mars sphere, the Jupiter sphere, the Saturn sphere. (I cannot now go into the still later periods; there too one sees something, but I cannot enter into it now). We see that all these spheres have something to do with karma. Ordinary consciousness does not know that man has within him the workings of the Mercury sphere, Moon sphere, and so on. Yet karma is brought into being by what is thus within man; he is impelled by these forces to live out his

karma in his own particular way. Heinrich Heine unfolded and developed his karma in the Venus sphere, the Mercury sphere, the Mars sphere; and it is these same beings of the Venus sphere, Mercury sphere, Mars sphere which work through his earthly bodily nature in order to help him to fulfil his karma. And so, by virtue of his karma, the whole being of man stands within the Cosmos, gives expression to the Cosmos here on Earth — in one case in this way, in another in that.

These things must be studied with a free and wide outlook. When I say to you that Goethe, in the Jupiter sphere, transformed what he had absorbed in ancient Greece into deep, instinctive wisdom, which comes out in all his creations because living beings are at work — this will have a different result in another case. At the time when the culture of ancient Mexico had fallen deeply into decline, though the echoes of the Mysteries and their cults still persisted, there lived a certain individual. He came into close contact with the magic arts, the decadent manifestations of the Mystery epoch in ancient Mexico, and he understood the sense in which such beings as Quetzalkoatl, Tetzkatlipoca, Taotl, had been living realities. Orthodox books on cultural history as a rule mention hardly anything more than the names of these Beings.

Nevertheless there was a time when men had living conceptions of all these Gods, of Quetzalkoatl, Tetzkatlipoca, Taotl; they had actual connection with super-sensible Beings. These matters were understood by the individual to whom I am referring; and comparatively quickly, without an intermediate incarnation, he was born again in the nineteenth century as the occultist *Eliphas Lévi*, having passed through the Jupiter sphere in his life between death and a new birth. In ancient Mexico he had been connected with such things as sorcery, magic arts, and the like, and had absorbed an outworn, decadent kind of knowledge. A peculiar, primitive form of wisdom — an inferior wisdom — was in this case transformed in the Jupiter sphere into the kind of content we find in the books of Eliphas Lévi. Whereas the Jupiter sphere produced in Goethe, as the fruit of the earlier incarnation, a mellow, Olympic fire, and great wisdom, Eliphas Lévi dabbles with a kind of charlatanism in all sorts of magical formulae and the like.

The earthly life is, of course, the decisive factor in what the stars are able to make of our karma. But the stars, that is to say the Beings who live where the stars indicate their existence, the stars transform into karma those things which, here on Earth, become elements in the constitution of karma.

It is in this way that we shall try more and more to deepen Anthroposophy. And if a great deal seems paradoxical and strange — as it certainly will — we must not mind it. In the paradoxical and the strange lies the truth. Man’s life is based upon foundations that are deeper and more complex than is usually believed. In order to understand it, our thoughts must not be fettered to the Earth but take wings out into the expanses of the Cosmos. On the Earth man gazes at matter and too easily forgets the Spirit. The opposite is the case as soon as only a little Imaginative knowledge leads us to the realms of the heavens. There quite certainly we forget matter and begin gradually to behold the Spirits, as did the simple Shepherds in an ancient, primitive time, and as was the case on into the Middle Ages when, instead of inscribing external signs on maps of the heavens, men drew figures and forms, because they actually beheld these figures in Imaginative knowledge.

Anthroposophy deepens our inner perceptions too, as I have repeatedly said. Just think of it! If we make the attempt with the kind of knowledge I have described, we begin to gaze upon the destiny of a single human being with holy awe. For what is it that works in the destiny of each human being? In very truth it is star-wisdom — all-embracing star-wisdom!

Nothing can enable us to behold the working of the Gods in the universe with deeper or truer feelings than to behold it in the destiny of a man. A world-justice flows through Eternity in the existence, the deeds, the thinking, of the Gods weaving behind the being of man.

That is what I wanted to say to you today concerning karma.

Karmic Relationships, VI: Lecture VII

The delay in arriving yesterday prevented me from speaking to you, as was my wish, about what has been happening in the Anthroposophical Society since the Christmas Foundation Meeting at the Goetheanum. As the purpose and intentions of that Meeting will have become known to friends through the News Sheet, I propose to speak briefly about the most important points only and then to continue with more intimate studies concerning the significance of this Christmas Foundation Meeting for the Anthroposophical Society.

The Christmas Meeting was intended to be a fundamental renewal, a new foundation of the Anthroposophical Society. Up to the time of the Christmas Foundation Meeting I was always able to make a distinction between the Anthroposophical Movement and the Anthroposophical Society. The latter represented as it were the earthly projection of something that exists in the spiritual worlds in a certain stream of the spiritual life. What was taught here on the Earth and communicated as anthroposophical wisdom — this was the reflection of the stream flowing in spiritual worlds through the present phase of the evolution of mankind. The

Anthroposophical Society was then a kind of ‘administrative organ’ for the anthroposophical knowledge flowing through the Anthroposophical Movement.

As time went on, this did not turn out satisfactorily for the true cultivation of Anthroposophy. It therefore became necessary that I myself — until then I had taught Anthroposophy without having any official connection with the Anthroposophical Society — should take over, together with the Dornach Executive, the leadership of the Anthroposophical Society as such. The Anthroposophical Movement and the Anthroposophical Society have thereby become one. Since the Christmas Foundation Meeting in Dornach, the opposite of what went before must be recognised: no distinction is to be made henceforward between Anthroposophical Movement and Anthroposophical Society, for they are now identical. And those who stand by my side as the Executive at the Goetheanum are to be regarded as a kind of esoteric Executive. Thus what comes about through this Executive may be characterised as ‘Anthroposophy in *deed* and *practice*,’ whereas formerly it could only be a matter of the administration of the anthroposophical teachings.

This means, however, that the whole Anthroposophical Society must gradually be placed upon a new basis — a basis which makes it possible for esotericism to stream through the Society — and the essence of the Anthroposophical Society in the future will be constituted by the due response and attitude on the part of those who desire to be Anthroposophists. This will have to be understood in the General Anthroposophical Society which henceforward will be an entirely open Society — so that, as was announced at Christmas, the Lecture-Courses too will be available for everyone, prefixed by the clauses laying down a kind of spiritual boundary-line.

The prosperity and fruitful development of the anthroposophical cause will depend upon a true understanding of the esoteric trend which, from now onwards, will be implicit in the Anthroposophical Movement. Care will be taken to ensure that the Anthroposophical Society is kept free from bureaucratic and formal administrative measures and that the sole basis everywhere is the *human* element to be cultivated within the Society. Naturally, the Executive at the Goetheanum will have much to administer: but the administration will not be the essential. The essential will be that the Executive at

the Goetheanum will act in this or that matter out of its own initiative. And what the Executive does, what in many ways it has already begun to do — that will form the content of the Anthroposophical Society.

Thereby a great many harmful tendencies that have arisen in the Society during recent years will be eliminated; difficulties will be in store for many Members, because all kinds of institutions, founded out of good-will, as the saying goes, did not prove equal to what they claimed to be and have really side-tracked the Anthroposophical Movement. Henceforward the Anthroposophical Movement will, in the human sense, be that which flows through the Anthroposophical Society.

The more deeply this is realised and understood the better it will be for the Anthroposophical Movement. And I am able to say the following. — Because that impulse prevailed among those who gathered at the Goetheanum at Christmas, it has been possible since then to introduce a quite different note into the Anthroposophical Movement. And to my deep satisfaction I have found heartfelt response to this in the different places I have so far been able to visit. It can be said that what was undertaken at Christmas was in a certain sense a hazard. For a certain

eventuality existed: because the leadership of the Anthroposophical Society was now combined with the presentation of the spiritual teachings, those Powers in the spiritual world who lead the Anthroposophical Movement might have withdrawn their guiding hands. It may now be said that this did not happen, but that the contrary is true: these spiritual Powers are responding with an ever greater measure of grace, with even greater bounty, to what is streaming through the Anthroposophical Movement. In a certain sense a pledge has been made to the spiritual world. This pledge will be unswervingly fulfilled and it will be seen that in the future things will happen in accordance with it. And so not only in respect of the Anthroposophical Movement but also in respect of the Anthroposophical Society, responsibility is laid upon the Dornach Executive.

I have only spoken these few preliminary words in order to lead up to something that it is now possible to say and is of such a nature that it can become part of the content of the Anthroposophical Movement. I want to speak about something that has to do with the karma of the Anthroposophical Society itself.

When we think to-day of how the Anthroposophical Society exists in the world as the embodiment of the

Anthroposophical Movement, we see a number of human beings coming together within the Anthroposophical Society. Any discerning person realises that there are also other human beings in the world — one finds them everywhere — whose karma predisposes them to come to the Anthroposophical Society but, to begin with, something holds them back, they do not immediately, and in the full sense, find their way into it — though eventually they will certainly do so, either in this or in the next incarnation. We must, however, bear the following in mind: Those human beings who through their karma come to the Anthroposophical Movement are predestined for this Movement.

Now everything that happens here in the physical world is foreshadowed in spiritual worlds. Nothing happens in the physical world that has not been prepared for spiritually, in the spiritual world. And this is the significant thing: What is coming to pass here on the Earth in the twentieth century as the gathering together of a number of human beings in the Anthroposophical Society, was prepared for during the first half of the nineteenth century when the souls of those human beings who are now in incarnation and are coming together in large numbers, were united in the spiritual realms before they descended into the

physical world. In the spiritual worlds at that time a kind of cult or ritual was lived through by a number of souls who were working together — a cult which instigated those longings that have arisen in the souls of those who now, in their present incarnations, come to the Anthroposophical Society. And whoever has a gift for recognising such souls in their bodies, does indeed recognise them as having worked together with him in the first half of the nineteenth century, when, in the spiritual world, mighty, cosmic Imaginations were presented of what I will call the *new Christianity*. Up there — as in their bodies now — the souls were united in order to gather into themselves out of what I will call the Cosmic Substantiality and the Cosmic Forces, that which, in mighty pictures, was of cosmic significance. It was the prelude of what was to become anthroposophical teaching and practice here on the Earth. By far the majority of the Anthroposophists who now sit together with one another would be able, if they perceived this, to say: Yes, we know one another, we were together in spiritual worlds, and in a super-sensible cult we experienced mighty, cosmic Imaginations together!

All these souls had gathered together in the first half of the nineteenth century in order to prepare for what, on Earth, was to become the Anthroposophical

Movement. In reality it was all a preparation for what I have often called the ‘stream of Michael,’ which appeared in the last third of the nineteenth century and is the most important of all spiritual intervention in the modern phase of human evolution. The Michael stream — to prepare the ways for Michael’s earthly-heavenly working — such was the task of the souls who were together in the spiritual world.

These souls, however, were drawn together by experiences they had undergone through long, long ages — through centuries, nay, in many cases through thousands of years. And among them *two* main groups are to be distinguished. The one group experienced the form of Christianity which during the first centuries of the Christian era had spread in Southern Europe and also, to some extent, in Middle Europe. This Christianity continued to present to its believers a Christ conceived of as the mighty Divine Messenger who had come down from the Sun to the Earth in order thereafter to work among men. With greater or less understanding, Christ was thus pictured by the Christians of the first centuries as the mighty ‘Sun God.’

But throughout Christendom at this time the faculty of instinctive clairvoyance once possessed by men was

fading away. Then they could no longer see in the Sun the great spiritual kingdom at whose centre the Christ once had His abode. The ancient clairvoyant perception of the descent of the Christ to the Earth became superseded by mere tradition — tradition that He had come down from the Sun to the Earth, uniting Himself with Jesus of Nazareth in the physical body. The majority of Christians now retained little more than the concept that once upon a time a Being had lived in Palestine — Christ Jesus — whose nature now began to be the subject of controversy. Had this Being been fully God? Or was He both God and Man and, if so, how was the Divinity related to the Humanity? These questions, with others arising from them, were the problems and the causes of strife in the Church Councils. Eventually the mass of the people had nothing left to them but the Decrees issued by Rome.

There were, however, among the Christians certain individuals who came more and more to be regarded as heretics. They still preserved as a living remembrance the tradition of the Christ as a Being of the Sun. To them, a Sun Being, by nature foreign to this Earth, was once incarnate. He descended to existence in this physical, material world. Until the seventh and eighth centuries these individuals found themselves placed in conditions which caused them to

say: In what is now making its appearance in the guise of Christianity there is no longer any real understanding of the nature of the Christ! These “heretics” became, in effect, weary of Christianity. There were indeed such souls who in the early Christian centuries until the seventh and eighth centuries passed through the gate of death in a mood of weariness in regard to Christianity. Whether or not they had been in incarnation in the intervening period, the incarnation of importance for them was that which occurred in the early Christian centuries. Then, from the seventh and eighth centuries onwards, they were preparing in the spiritual world for that great and powerful action of which I told you when I said that in the first half of the nineteenth century a kind of cult took place in the super-sensible world. These individuals participated in this cult and they belong to the one group of souls who have found their way into the Anthroposophical Society.

The other group of souls had their last important incarnation in the latest pre-Christian — not the first Christian — centuries, and in the ancient Pagan Mysteries prior to Christianity they had still been able to gaze with clairvoyant vision into the spiritual world. They had learnt in these ancient Mysteries that the Christ would come down one day to the Earth. They

did not live on Earth during the early centuries of Christianity but remained in the super-sensible worlds and only after the seventh century descended to incarnations of importance. These are souls who, as it were from the vantage-point of the super-sensible, witnessed the entry of the Christ into earthly culture and civilisation. They longed for Christianity. And at the same time they were resolute in a desire to work actively and vigorously to bring into the world a truly cosmic, truly spiritual form of Christianity.

These two groups united with the other souls in that super-sensible cult during the first half of the nineteenth century. It was like a great cosmic, spiritual festival, lasting for many decades as a spiritual happening in the world immediately bordering on the physical. There they were — the souls who then descended, having worked together in the super-sensible world to prepare for their next incarnation on the Earth, those who were weary of Christianity and those who were yearning for it. Towards the end of the nineteenth century they descended to incarnation and when they had arrived on Earth they were ready, having thus made preparation, to come into the Anthroposophical Society.

All this, as I have said, had been in course of preparation for many centuries. Here on the Earth, Christianity had developed in such a way that the Gospels had gradually come to be interpreted as if they spoke merely of some kind of abstract “heights” from which a Being — Jesus of Nazareth — came down to proclaim the Christ. Men had no longer any inkling of how the world of stars as the expression of the Spiritual is connected with the spiritual life; hence it was also impossible for them to understand what is signified by saying: Christ, as a divine Sun Hero, came down into Jesus in order that He might share the destiny of men. It is precisely those facts of most significance that escape the ordinary student of history. Above all, there is no understanding of those who are called “heretics.” Moreover, among the souls who came down to Earth as the twentieth century approached — the souls weary of Christianity and those longing for it — there is, for the most part, no self-recognition. The “heretic-souls” do not recognise themselves.

By the seventh and eighth centuries such traditions as had been kept alive by the heretics who had become weary of Christianity had largely disappeared. The knowledge was sustained in small circles only, where until the twelfth century — the middle of the

Middle Ages — it was preserved and cultivated. These circles were composed of Teachers, divinely blessed Teachers, who still cultivated something of this ancient knowledge of spiritual Christianity, cosmological Christianity. There were some amongst them, too, who had directly received communications from the past and in them a kind of Inspiration arose; thus they were able to experience a reflection — whether strong or faint, a true image — of what in the first Christian centuries men had been able to behold under the influence of a mighty Inspiration of the descent of the Sun God leading to the Mystery of Golgotha.

And so two main streams were there. One, as we have seen, is the stream which derives directly from the heretical movements of the first Christian centuries. Those belonging to it were fired still by what had been alive in the Platonism of ancient Greece. So fired were they that when through the tidings emanating from ancient times their inner vision opened, they were always able, under the influence of a genuine, albeit faint Inspiration, to perceive the descent of the Christ to the Earth and to glimpse His work on the Earth. This was the Platonic stream.

For the other stream a different destiny was in store. To this stream belonged those souls above all who had their last important incarnation in the pre-Christian era and who had glimpsed Christianity as something ordained for the future. The task of this stream was to prepare the intellect for that epoch which had its beginning in the first half of the fifteenth century. This was to be the epoch when the human intellect would unfold — the epoch of the Spiritual Soul. It was prepared for by the Aristotelians, in contrast — but in harmonious contrast — to what the Platonists had accomplished. And those who propagated Aristotelian teachings until well into the twelfth century were souls who had passed through their last really important incarnation in ancient Pagan times, especially in the world of Greek culture. And then — in the middle of the Middle Ages, in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries — there came about that great and wonderful spiritual understanding, if I may call it so, between the Platonists and the Aristotelians. And among these Platonists and Aristotelians were the leaders of those who as the two groups of souls I have described, advanced the Anthroposophical Movement.

By the twelfth century a certain School had come into being — as it were through inner necessity — a School in which the afterglow of the old Platonic

seership lit up once again. It was the great and illustrious School of Chartres. In this School were great teachers to whom the mysteries of early Christianity were still known and in whose hearts and souls this knowledge kindled a vision of the spiritual foundation of Christianity. In the School of Chartres in France, where stands the magnificent Cathedral, built with such profusion of detail, there was a concentration, a gathering-together, as it were, of knowledge that only shortly before had been widely scattered, though confined to the small circles of which I have spoken. One of the men with whom the School was able to forge a living link was *Peter of Compostella*. He was able, with inspired understanding, to bring the ancient spiritual Christianity to life again within his own heart and soul. A whole succession of wonderful figures were teachers in Chartres. Truly remarkable voices spoke of Christianity in the School of Chartres in this twelfth century. There, for example, we find *Bernard of Chartres*, *Bernardus Sylvestris*, *John of Salisbury*, but above all the great *Alanus ab Insulis*. Mighty teachers indeed! When they spoke in the School of Chartres it was as if Plato himself, interpreting Christianity, were working in person among them. They taught the spiritual content and substance of Christianity. The writings that have come down from them may seem full of abstractions to those who read them to-day. But

that is due simply to the abstract trend that characterises modern thinking. The impulse of the Christ is implicit in all the descriptions of the spiritual world contained in the writings of these outstanding personalities. I will give you an idea of how Bernardus Sylvestris and Alanus ab Insulis, above all, taught their initiated pupils. Strange as it will seem to the modern mind, such revelations were indeed given at that time to the pupils of Chartres.

It was taught: New life will come to Christianity. Its spiritual content and essence will be understood once again when Kali Yuga, the Age of Darkness, has come to an end and the dawn of a new Age breaks. And with the year 1899 this has already come to pass for us who are living at the present time; this is the great and mighty change that was to come for humanity at the end of Kali Yuga, the mighty impulse given two decades previously through the advent of Michael. This was prophetically announced in the School of Chartres in the twelfth century, above all by Bernardus Sylvestris and Alanus ab Insulis. But these men did not teach in the Aristotelian way, they did not teach by way of the intellect. They gave their teachings entirely in the form of mighty, imaginative pictures — pictures whereby the spiritual content of Christianity became concretely real. But there were certain

prophetic teachings; and I should like by means of a brief extract to give you an indication of one such teaching.

Alanus ab Insulis spoke to the following effect to a narrow circle of his initiated pupils: — ‘As we contemplate the universe to-day, we still regard the Earth as the centre, we judge everything from the Earth, as the centre. If the terrestrial conception which enables us to unfold our pictures and our imaginations… if this conception alone were to fertilise the coming centuries, progress would not be possible for mankind. We must come to an understanding with the Aristotelians who bring to humanity the intellect which must then be spiritualised so that in the twentieth century it may shine forth in a new and spiritual form among men. We, in our time, regard the Earth as the centre of the Cosmos, we speak of the planets circling around the Earth, we describe the whole heaven of stars as it presents itself to physical eyes as if it revolved around the Earth. But there will come one who will say: Let us place the Sun at the spatial centre of the cosmic system! But when he who will thus place the Sun at the centre of the spatial universe has come, the picture of the world will become arid. Men will only calculate the courses of the planets, will merely

indicate the positions of the heavenly bodies, speaking of them as gases, or burning, luminous, physical bodies; they will know the starry heavens only in terms of mathematical and mechanical laws. But this arid picture of the world that will become widespread in the coming times, has, after all, *one* thing — meagre, it is true, yet it has it none the less. … We look at the universe from the *Earth*; he who will come will look at the universe from the standpoint of the *Sun*. He will be like one who indicates a "direction" only — the direction leading towards a path of majestic splendour, fraught with most wonderful happenings and peopled by glorious Beings. But he will give the direction through abstract concepts only.' (Thereby the Copernican picture of the world was indicated, arid and abstract yet giving the direction…) 'For,' said Alanus ab Insulis, 'everything we present through the Imaginations that come to us must pass away; it must pass away and the picture men now have of the world must become altogether abstract, hardly more than a pointer along a path strewn with wonderful memorials. For then, in the spiritual world, there will be One who will use this pointer — which for the purposes of world-renewal is nothing more than a means of directive — in order that, together with the prevailing intellectualism, he may then lay the foundations of the new spirituality … there will be One

who will have this pointer as his only tool. This One will be St. Michael! For Him the ground must be made free; he must sow the path with new seed. And to that end, nothing but lines must remain — mathematical lines!’

A kind of magic breathed through the School of Chartres when Alanus ab Insulis was giving such teachings to a few of his chosen pupils. It was as if the ether-world all around were set astir by the surging waves of this mighty Michael teaching.

And so a spiritual atmosphere was imparted to the world. It spread across Western Europe, down into Southern Italy, where there were many who were able to receive it into themselves. In their souls something arose like a mighty Inspiration, enabling them to gaze into the spiritual world.

But in the evolution of the world it is so that those who are initiated into the great secrets of existence — as to a certain degree were Alanus ab Insulis and Bernardus Sylvestris — such men know that it is only possible to achieve this or that particular aim to a limited extent. A man like Alanus ab Insulis said to himself: We, the Platonists, must go through the gate of death; for the present we can live only in the

spiritual world. We must look down from the spiritual world, leaving the physical world to those others whose task it is to cultivate the intellect in the Aristotelian way. The time has come now for the cultivation of the intellect. Late in his life Alanus ab Insulis put on the habit of the Cistercian Order; he became a Cistercian. And in the Cistercian Order many of these Platonic teachings were contained. Those among the Cistercians who possessed the deeper knowledge said to themselves: Henceforward we can work only from the spiritual world; the field must be relinquished to the Aristotelians.

These Aristotelians were, for the most part, in the Order of the Dominicans. And so in the thirteenth century the leadership of the spiritual life in Europe passed over to them.

But a heritage remained from men such as Peter of Compostella, Alanus ab Insulis, Bernard of Chartres, John of Salisbury and that poet who from the School of Chartres wrote a remarkable poem on the Seven Liberal Arts. It took significant hold of the spiritual life of Europe. What had come into being in the School of Chartres was so potent that it found its way, for example, to the University of Orleans. There, in the second half of the twelfth century, a great deal

penetrated in the form of teaching from what had streamed to the pupils of Chartres through mighty pictures and words — words as it were of silver — from the lips of Bernardus Sylvestris, of Alanus ab Insulis.

The spiritual atmosphere was so charged with this influence from Chartres that the following incident happened. — While a man, returning to Italy from his ambassadorial post in Spain, was hastening homeward, he received news of the overthrow of the Guelphs in Florence, and at the same time suffered a slight sunstroke. In this condition his etheric body loosened and gathered in what was still echoing through the ether from the School of Chartres. And through what was thus wafted to him in the ether, something like an Intuition came to him — an Intuition such as had come to many human beings in the early Christian centuries. First he saw outspread before him the earthly world as it surrounds mankind, ruled over, not by ‘laws of Nature,’ as the saying went in later times — but by the great handmaiden of the Divine Demiurgos, by *Natura*, who in the first Christian centuries was the successor of Proserpine. In those days men did not speak of abstract laws of Nature; to the gaze of the Initiates, *Being* was implicit in what worked in Nature as an all-embracing, divine Power. Proserpine, who divides her time between the upper

and the lower worlds, was presented in the Greek Mysteries as the power ruling over Nature. Her successor in the early Christian centuries was the Goddess Natura.

While under the influence of the sunstroke and of what came to him from the School of Chartres, this personality had gazed into the weaving life of the Goddess Natura, and, allowing this Intuition to impress him still more deeply, he beheld the working of the Elements — Earth, Water, Air, Fire — as this was once revealed in the ancient Mysteries; he beheld the majestic weaving of the Elements. Then he beheld the mysteries of the soul of man, he beheld those seven Powers of whom it was known that they are the great celestial Instructors of the human race. — This was known in the early Christian centuries. In those times men did not speak, as they do to-day, of abstract teachings, where something is imparted by way of concepts and ideas. In the first Christian centuries men spoke of being instructed from the spiritual world by the Goddesses Dialectica, Rhetorica, Grammatica, Arithmetica, Geometria, Astrologia or Astronomia, and Musica. These Seven were not the abstract conceptions which they have become today; men gazed upon them, saw them before their eyes — I cannot say in bodily reality but as Beings of *soul* —

and allowed themselves to be instructed by these heavenly figures. Later on they no longer appeared to men in the solitude of vision as the living Goddesses Dialectica, Rhetorica and the rest, but in abstract forms, in abstract, theoretic doctrines.

The personality of whom I am now speaking allowed all that I have related to work upon him. And he was led then into the planetary world, wherein the mysteries of the soul of man are unveiled. Then in the world of stars, having traversed the “Great Cosmic Ocean,” he was led by Ovid, who after he had passed through the gate of death had become the guide and leader of souls in the spiritual world. This personality, who was *Brunetto Latini*, became the teacher of Dante. What Dante learned from Brunetto Latini he then wrote down in his poem the *Divina Commedia*. And so that mighty poem is a last reflection of what lived on here and there as Platonism. It had flowed from the lips of Sylvestris at the School of Chartres in the twelfth century and was still taught by those who had been so inwardly fired by the old traditions that the secrets of Christianity rose up within them as Inspirations which they were then able to communicate to their pupils through the word.

The influence of Alanus ab Insulis, brought into the Cistercian Order, passed over to the Dominicans. Then to the Dominicans fell the paramount task: the cultivation of the intellect in the Aristotelian sense. But there was an intervening period: the School of Chartres had been at its prime in the twelfth century — and in the thirteenth century, in the Dominican Order, the intensive development of Aristotelian Scholasticism began. The great teachers in the School of Chartres had passed through the gate of death into the spiritual world and were together for a time with the Dominicans who were beginning to come down through birth and who, after they had descended, established Aristotelianism on the Earth. We must therefore think of an intervening period, when, as it were in a great heavenly Council, the last of the great teachers of Chartres after they had passed through the gate of death were together with those who, as Dominicans, were to cultivate Aristotelianism — were together with them before these latter souls came down to Earth. There, in the spiritual world, the great “heavenly contract” was made. Those who under the leadership of Alanus ab Insulis had arrived in the spiritual world said to the Aristotelians who were about to descend: It is not the time now for us to be on the Earth; for the present we must work from here, from the spiritual world. In the near future it will not

be possible for us to incarnate on the Earth. It is now your task to cultivate the intellect in the dawning epoch of the Spiritual Soul. —

Then the great Schoolmen came down and carried out the agreement that had been reached between them and the last great Platonists of the School of Chartres. One, for example, who had been among the earliest to descend received a message through another who had remained with Alanus ab Insulis in the spiritual world for a longer time than he — that is to say, the younger man had remained longer with the spiritual Individuality who had borne the name ‘Alanus ab Insulis.’ The younger one who came down later worked together with the older man to whom he conveyed the message and thus within the Dominican Order began the preparation for the Age of Intellectualism. The one who had remained somewhat longer in the spiritual world with Alanus ab Insulis first put on the habit of the Cistercian Order, exchanging it only later for that of the Dominican. And so those who had once lived under the influence of what came into the world with Aristotle, were now working on the Earth, and up above, keeping watch, but in living connection with the Aristotelians working on the Earth, were the Platonists who had been in the School of Chartres. The spiritual world and the physical world

went hand in hand. Through the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries it was as though Aristotelians and Platonists were stretching out their hands to one another. And then, as time went on, many of those who had come down in order to introduce Aristotelianism into Europe were in the spiritual world with the others once again.

But the further course of evolution was such that the former leaders in the School of Chartres, together with those who held the leading positions in the Dominican Order, placed themselves at the head of those who in the first half of the nineteenth century, in that mighty super-sensible cult enacted in the pictures already indicated, made preparation for the later anthroposophical stream. In the nature of things, the first to come down again were those who had worked more or less as Aristotelians; for under the influence of intellectualism the time for a new deepening of spirituality had not yet come. But there was an unbreakable agreement which still works on. In accordance with this agreement there must go forth from the Anthroposophical Movement something that must find its culmination before this century has run its course. For over the Anthroposophical Society a destiny hovers: many of those in the Anthroposophical Society to-day will have to come down again to the

Earth before, and at the end of, the twentieth century, but united, then, with those who were either the actual leaders in the School of Chartres or were pupils at Chartres. And so, if civilisation is not to fall into utter decadence, before the end of the twentieth century the Platonists of Chartres and the Aristotelians who came later will have to be working together on the Earth.

In the future, the Anthroposophical Society must learn to understand, with full consciousness, something of its karma. For a great deal that is unable to come to birth — above all at the present time — is waiting in the womb of the spiritual evolution of mankind. Also, very many things to-day assume an entirely different form; but if one can discern the symptoms, the inner meaning of what is thus externalised becomes evident and the veils are drawn aside from much that continues to live spiritually through the centuries. At this point I may perhaps give a certain indication. Why, indeed, should it not be given, now that the esoteric impulse is to flow through the Anthroposophical Society? — I should like to speak of something that will show you how observation of surrounding circumstances opens up a vista into manifold connections.

When I myself, in preparing for the Anthroposophical Movement, was led along a particular path of destiny, this showed itself in a strange connection with the Cistercian Order, which is closely connected, in its turn, with Alanus ab Insulis. [Let me say here, for those who like to weave legends, that I, in respect of my own individuality, am in no way to be identified with Alanus ab Insulis. I only want to prevent legends arising from what I am putting before you in an esoteric way. The essential point is that these things stem from esoteric sources.] In an altogether remarkable way my destiny allowed me to discern through the external circumstances, such spiritual connections as I have now described. Perhaps some of you know the articles in the Goetheanum Weekly entitled, *Mein Lebensgang* (*The Course of My Life*). I have spoken there of how in my youth I was sent, not to a *Gymnasium*, but to a *Real Schule*, and only later acquired the classical education given in the *Gymnasia*. I can only regard this as a remarkable dispensation of my karma. For in the town where I spent my youth the *Gymnasium* was only a few steps away from the *Real Schule* and it was by a hair's breadth that I went, not to the *Gymnasium* but to the *Real Schule*. If, however, at that time I had gone to the *Gymnasium* in the town, I should have become a priest in the Cistercian Order. Of that there is no doubt

whatever. For at this *Gymnasium* all the teachers were Cistercians. I was deeply attracted to all these priests, many of whom were extremely learned men. I read a great deal that they wrote and was profoundly stirred by it. I loved these priests and the only reason why I passed the Cistercian Order by was because I did not attend the *Gymnasium*. Karma led me elsewhere … but for all that I did not escape the Cistercian Order. I have spoken of this too in my autobiography. I was always of a sociable disposition, and in my autobiography I have written of how, later on, in the house of Marie Eugenie della Grazie in Vienna, I came into contact with practically every theologian in the city. Nearly all of them were Cistercian priests. And in this way a vista opened out, inducing one to go back in time … for me personally it came very naturally … a vista leading through the stream of the Cistercian Order back to the School of Chartres. For Alanus ab Insulis had been a Cistercian. And strange to say, when, later on, I was writing my first Mystery Play, *The Portal of Initiation*, I simply could not, for reasons of aesthetic necessity, do otherwise than clothe the female characters on the stage in a costume consisting of a long tunic and what is called a stole. If you picture such a garment — a yellowish-white tunic with a black stole and black girdle — there you have the robe of the Cistercian Order. I was thinking at the

time only of aesthetic necessities, but this robe of the Cistercian Order came very naturally before me. There you have one indication of how connections unfold before those who are able to perceive the inner, spiritual significance of symptoms appearing in the external world.

A beginning was made at Christmas more and more to draw aside the veils from these inner connections. They *must* be brought to light, for mankind is waiting for knowledge of inner reality, having for centuries experienced only that of the outer, material world, and civilisation to-day is in a terrible position. Among the many indications still to be given, we shall, on the one side, have to speak of the work of the School of Chartres, of how Initiates in this School passed through the gate of death and encountered in the spiritual world those souls who later wore the robe of the Dominicans in order to spread Aristotelianism with its intellectuality and to prepare with vigour and energy the epoch of the Spiritual (or Consciousness) Soul. And so — let me put it in this way — in the Anthroposophical Society we have Aristotelianism working on, but in a spiritualised form, and awaiting its further spiritualisation. Then, at the end of the century many of those who are here to-day, will return, but they will be united, then, with those who were the

teachers in the School of Chartres. The aim of the Anthroposophical Society is to unite the two elements. The one element is the Aristotelianism in the souls who were for the most part connected with the old Pagan wisdom, who were waiting for Christianity and who retained this longing until, as Dominicans, they were able through the activity of the intellect to promulgate Christianity. They will be united with souls who had actually experienced Christianity in the physical world and whose greatest teachers gathered together in the School of Chartres. Up to now, these teachers of Chartres have not incarnated, although in my contact with the Cistercian Order I was able again and again to come across *incorporations* of many of those who were in the School of Chartres. In the Cistercian Order one met many a personality who was not a reincarnation of a pupil of Chartres but in whose life there were periods when — for hours, for days — he was inspired by some such Individuality from the School of Chartres. It was a matter, in these cases, of incorporation, not incarnation. And wonderful things were written, of which one could only ask: *who* is the actual author? The author was not the monk who in the Cistercian Order at that time wore the yellowish-white robe with the black stole and girdle, but the real author was the personality who for hours, days or weeks had come down into the soul of one of these

Cistercian Brothers. Much of this influence worked on in essays or writings little known in literature. — I myself once had a remarkable conversation with a Cistercian who was an extremely learned man. I have mentioned it, too, in *The Course of My Life*. We were going away from a gathering, and speaking about the Christ problem. I propounded my ideas which were the same, essentially, as those I give in my lectures. He became uneasy while I was speaking, and said: 'We may possibly hit upon something of the kind; we shall not allow ourselves to think such things.' He spoke in similar terms about other problems of Christology. But then we stopped for a short time — the moment stands most vividly before me — it was where the Schottenring and the Burgring meet in Vienna, on the one side the Hofburg and on the other the Hotel de France and the Votiv-Kirche … we stopped for a minute or two and the man said: "I should like you to come with me. I will give you a book from my library in which something remarkable is said on the subject you have been speaking about." I went with him and he gave me a book about the Druses. The whole circumstances of our conversation in connection with the perusal of this book led me to the knowledge that when, having started from Christology, I went on to speak of repeated earthly lives, this deeply learned man was, as it were, emptied mentally in a strange

way, and when he came to himself again remembered only that he possessed a book about the Druses in which something was said about reincarnation. He knew about it only from this one book. He was a Hofrat (Councillor) at the University of Vienna and was so erudite that it was said of him: “Hofrat N. knows the whole world and three villages besides.” … so great was his learning — but in his bodily existence he knew only that in a book about the Druses something was said about repeated earthly lives. This is an example of the difference between what men have in their subconsciousness and what flows as the spiritual world through their souls. — And then a noteworthy episode occurred. I was once giving a lecture in Vienna. The same person was there and after the lecture he made a remark which could only be interpreted in the sense that at this moment he had complete understanding of a certain man belonging to the present age and of the relation of this man to his earlier incarnation. And what the person said on that occasion about the connection between two earthly lives, was correct, was not false. But through his intellect he understood nothing; it simply came from his lips.

By this I want only to indicate how spiritual movements reach into the immediate present. But

what to-day shines in as it were through many tiny windows must in the future become a unity through that connection between the leaders of the School of Chartres and the leading spirits of Scholasticism, when the spiritual revival whereby intellectualism itself is lifted to the Spirit, sets in at the end of the twentieth century. To make this possible, let human beings of the twentieth century not throw away their opportunities! But everything to-day depends upon free will, and whether the two allied groups will be able to descend for the re-spiritualisation of culture in the twentieth century — this depends very specially upon whether the Anthroposophical Society understands how to cultivate Anthroposophy with the right devotion.

So much for to-day. — We have heard of the connection of the anthroposophical stream with the deep mystery of the epoch which began with the manifestation of the Christ in the Mystery of Golgotha and has developed in the way I have described. More will be said in the second lecture.

Karmic Relationships, VI: Lecture VIII

Yesterday I spoke of the karma of the Anthroposophical Society. To-day I propose to speak of certain cognate matters, and in such a way that the present lecture will be comprehensible in itself.

Everything that will have to be achieved in the present epoch of evolution as a preparation for spiritual happenings in the near and more distant future, is connected with what, among anthroposophists, I have often called the Michael Event. And in connection with this Michael Event I want to speak to-day about something that concerns the *Anthroposophical Movement*.

In speaking of a happening such as this Michael Event, it must always be remembered that the world develops by stages. When we study the evolution of the world with the faculties which man's earthly life between birth and death enables him to possess to-day, we see humanity evolving on the Earth, we see ancient peoples arising from still earlier peoples; we see that from the background of very ancient Oriental civilisations, from the Indian, the Chinese, the Arabian and the Chaldean-Egyptian peoples, the Greeks and

the Romans gradually emerge; then we come to the Middle Ages and finally to our own age — our modern age with all its aberrations but also with its great technical achievements. Yet not only is there this external development of the peoples but as it were behind it, evolution is also taking place. We can perceive evolution being passed through not only by mankind but also by spiritual Beings who are connected in certain ways with the evolution of humanity. In their ranks are those Beings called the Angeloi — the Angels in Christian terminology. They are directly connected with the *individual* human being. They lead, or guide him in so far as he needs guidance, from one earthly life to another and are his Guardians, his Protectors, whenever and wherever he needs their protection. Therefore, super-sensible though they be and imperceptible to earthly sight, the Angeloi are directly connected with mankind's evolution.

In the next immediately adjacent spiritual realm, the Beings whom we call the Hierarchy of the Archangeloi, the Archangels, unfold their activity. The Archangeloi have to do with much that also plays a part in the evolution of humanity. They have to do, not with the individual human being, but with groups of human beings. Thus, as I have said in many anthroposophical

lectures, the evolution of the *peoples* is under the rulership of Archangelic Beings. But it is also the case that certain epochs in Earth-evolution receive their essential impulses from individual Archangeloi. For example, during the three centuries preceding the last third of the nineteenth century, namely during the nineteenth, eighteenth, seventeenth centuries and part of the sixteenth, we must think of the civilised world as being essentially under the dominion of the Archangel known to Christians capable of speaking of these things, as *Gabriel*. This period was therefore the Age of Gabriel.

This particular Gabriel Age is of great significance for the whole evolution of mankind in modern times, for the following reason. Since the Mystery of Golgotha took place it has been possible for men on the Earth to have this realisation: Through the Mystery of Golgotha, Christ, the sublime Being of the Sun, has come down to the Earth. He has descended from the Sun to the Earth, entering into the body of Jesus and uniting Himself with Earth’s destiny. But although the Christ Being has remained united with the Earth, it has not been possible through the succeeding rulerships of Archangeloi from the time of the Mystery of Golgotha until that of the dominion of Gabriel, for the Christ Impulse itself actually to lay hold of the

inner physical and etheric forces of mankind. This became possible for the first time under the Gabriel impulse which began to work about three hundred years before the last third of the nineteenth century. Thus, in reality, it is only since that time that *by way of the forces of heredity themselves* the Christ Impulse has been able to penetrate humanity inwardly. As yet this has not been achieved.

Gabriel rules over the whole realm of the physical forces of heredity within humanity. He is the super-sensible Spirit who is connected essentially with the sequence of the generations, who is — if I may put it so — the great Guardian Spirit of the mothers who bring children into the world. Gabriel has to do with births, with the embryonic development of the human being. The forces of Gabriel work in the *spiritual* processes underlying the physical process of propagation. And so it is only since this recent Gabriel rulership that the physical propagation of mankind on Earth has come into connection in the real sense with the Christ Impulse.

From the end of the eighteen-seventies, the rulership of *Michael* begins. It is a rulership altogether different in character from that of Gabriel. Whereas the rulership of the Archangel in the three preceding

centuries comes to expression in spiritual impulses working in the physical, Michael is the Archangel who in his rulership has paramountly to do with the powers of the intelligence in mankind, with everything, therefore, that concerns the intellectual, the spiritual evolution and culture of mankind. In any study of the earthly circumstances of humanity it is extremely important to realise that the Gabriel rulership which in the spiritual sphere has an effect upon what is most deeply *physical*, is always followed by the regency of Michael, who has to do with the *spiritual* element in culture. The Archangel Gabriel, therefore, is the Divine Guardian of the process of physical propagation. The Spirit who has to do with the development of the sciences, of the arts, of the cultural element of the epoch, is the Archangel known in Christianity as Michael. Over those civilisations which are predominant in every epoch, seven successive Archangel-rulerships take place. Six other such rulerships have therefore preceded the present rulership of Michael. And if, beginning with Gabriel, we go backwards through these rulerships, we come to an epoch when Michael again held sway. Every such rulership, therefore, is always the repetition of earlier, identical rulerships, and the evolution of the Archangels themselves takes place through this cyclic progress. After a period of about two thousand years,

the same Archangel always assumes the rulership again within the predominating civilisation.

But these periods of rulership, each of which lasts for a little over three hundred years, are essentially different from one another. The difference is not always as great as it is between the Michael rulership and the Gabriel rulership, but the rulerships are, nevertheless, essentially different. And here we can say: Each reign of Gabriel is preparatory to an age when the peoples become more widely separated from one another and more differentiated. In the age following his dominion the nationalistic tendency also becomes accentuated. So, if you ask yourself why it is that such strong nationalistic feeling is asserting itself to-day under the rulership of Michael, which has now begun, the answer is that preparation took place spiritually a long time ago; the influence worked on and then began to decline, but the after-effects — often worse than the event itself — continue. It is only by degrees that the impulse of Michael can make its way into what is, to a great extent, a legacy from the past reign of Gabriel. But always when an age of Michael dawns, a longing begins to arise in mankind to overcome racial distinctions and to spread through all the peoples living on the Earth the highest and most spiritual form of culture produced by that

particular age. Michael's rulership is always characterised by the growth of *cosmopolitanism*, by the spread of a spiritual impulse among peoples who are ready to receive it, no matter what language they speak. Of the seven Archangels who send their impulses into the evolution of humanity, Michael is always the one who gives the cosmopolitan impulse — and at the same time the impulse for the spreading of whatever is of most intrinsic value in a particular epoch.

If we turn now to past times in the evolution of humanity, asking ourselves in what period the previous Michael Age occurred, we come to the epoch which culminated in those cosmopolitan deeds springing from the impulse of the lofty spiritual culture of Greece, whose fruits were carried over to Asia through the campaigns of Alexander. There, developing from the foundations of the ancient culture, we see the urge to take the spiritual culture of Greece — the little land of Greece — over to the Oriental peoples, to Egypt; there is an urge to spread a cosmopolitan impulse in this way among all the peoples able to receive it. This cosmopolitan impulse, this urge of the earlier Age of Michael, to spread over the world all that the Greek culture had achieved for humanity, was of the very greatest possible

significance. The crowning triumph of that Age was represented, in a certain sense, by the city of Alexandria in its prime, standing yonder in North Africa.

These things came to pass in the preceding Age of Michael. Thereafter the other six Archangels assume in time their dominions. And in the last third of the nineteenth century, at the end of the seventies, a new Michael Age begins. But never yet in the whole of earthly evolution has the difference between two Ages of Michael been as great as that between the Michael Age at the time of Alexander and the one in which we have been living since the end of the seventies of the last century. For between these two reigns of Michael falls the Event which gives Earth-evolution its true meaning: the Mystery of Golgotha.

Let us now consider what it is that Michael has to administer in the spiritual Cosmos. It is Michael's task to administer a power that is essentially *spiritual*, reaching its zenith in man's faculty of *intellectual understanding*. Michael is not the Spirit who, if I may put it so, cultivates intellectuality *per se*; the spirituality he bestows strives to bring enlightenment to mankind in the form of ideas, of thoughts — but ideas and thoughts that grasp the spiritual. His wish is

that man shall be a free being, but one who discerns in his concepts, in his thoughts, what comes to him as revelation from the spiritual worlds.

And now think of the Michael Age at the time of Alexander. As I have so often said, human beings in our day are extremely clever — that is to say, they form concepts, they have ideas; they are intellectual, possessing as it were a *self-made* intellectuality. People were clever, too, in the days of Alexander. Only if in those times they had been asked: Whence do you derive your concepts, your ideas? — they would not have said: We have produced them out of ourselves. … No, they received into themselves the spiritual revelations, and together with these revelations, the ideas. They did not regard the ideas as something which man evolves out of himself, but as something revealed to him in his spiritual nature. The task of Michael at that time was to administer this *heavenly* Intellectuality — in contrast to earthly Intellectuality. Michael was the greatest of the Archangels who have their abode on the Sun. He was the Spirit who sent down from thence to the Earth not only the Sun's physical-etheric rays but, within them, the inspired Intellectuality. And in those past days men knew: the power of Intelligence on Earth is a gift of the Heavens, of the Sun; it is sent down from the Sun. And the one

who actually sends the spiritual Intellectuality down to the Earth, is Michael. In the ancient Sun Mysteries this wonderful Initiation-teaching was given: Michael dwells on the Sun; there he administers the Cosmic Intelligence. This Cosmic Intelligence, inspired into human beings, is a gift of Michael.

Then came the epoch when man was to be made ready to unfold intellect out of his own, individual force of soul; he was not merely to receive the Cosmic Intelligence through revelation but to evolve Intelligence out of his inner forces. Preparation for this was made by Aristotelianism — that remarkable philosophy which arose in the twilight period of Greek culture and was the impulse underlying the campaigns of Alexander the Great in Africa and Asia.

By means of Aristotelianism, earthly Intelligence emerged as though from the shell of the Cosmic Intelligence. And from what came to be known as Aristotelian Logic there arose that intellectual framework on which the thinking of all subsequent centuries was based; it conditioned human intelligence.

And now you must conceive that through this single deed the Michael Impulses culminated: the earthly-

human Intelligence was established, while, as a result of the campaigns of Alexander, the culture of Greece was imprinted upon those peoples who at that time were ready to receive the cosmopolitan impulse.

The epoch of Michael was followed by that of *Oriphiel*. The Archangel Oriphiel assumed dominion. The Mystery of Golgotha took place. At the beginning of the Christian era, those human souls who had been conscious of the leadership of the Archangel Michael in Alexander's time and had participated in the deeds of which I have just spoken, were gathered around Michael in the realm of the Sun. Michael had relinquished his dominion for the time being to Oriphiel, and in the realm of the Sun, together with those human souls who were to be his servants, Michael witnessed the departure of Christ from the Sun.

This, too, is something of which we must be mindful. — Those human souls who are connected with the Anthroposophical Movement may say to themselves: We were united with Michael in the realm of the Sun. Christ, who hitherto had sent His Impulses towards the Earth from the Sun, departed from the Sun in order to unite Himself with earthly evolution! — Try to picture to yourselves this stupendous cosmic event that took

place in realms beyond the Earth: it lies within the mighty vista open to those human souls who at that time were gathered around Michael as servants of the Angeloi, after his rulership on Earth had ended. In the realm of the Sun they witnessed the departure of the Christ from the Sun. “He is departing!” … such was their great and overwhelming experience when He left in order to unite His destiny with the destiny of earthly humanity.

Truly it is not only on the Earth but in the life between death and rebirth that the souls of human beings receive the impulse for the paths they take. Above all was it so in the case of those who had lived through the time of Alexander. A great and mighty impulse went forth from that moment in cosmic history when these souls witnessed the departure of Christ from the Sun. They saw clearly: the Cosmic Intelligence is passing over gradually from the Cosmos to the Earth! And Michael, together with those around him saw that all the Intelligence once streaming through the Cosmos was now sinking down, stage by stage, upon the Earth.

Michael and those who belonged to him — no matter whether they were in the spiritual world or incarnate for a brief earthly life — were able to visualise the rays

of the Intelligence arriving, in the eighth century of the Christian era, in the earthly realm itself. And they knew that down upon the Earth the Intelligence would unfold and develop further. Now, on the Earth, the appearance of the first ‘self-made’ thinkers could be observed. Hitherto, great human beings who were ‘thinkers’ had received their thoughts by way of Inspiration; the thoughts had been inspired into them. Only now, from the eighth century A.D. were there those who could be called ‘self-made’ thinkers — those who produced their own thoughts out of themselves. And within the Archangelic host in the realm of the Sun, the mighty proclamation rang forth from Michael: The power belonging to my kingdom and under my administration in this realm is here no longer; it streams downwards to the Earth and must there surge onwards!

From the eighth century onwards this was the spectacle of the Earth as witnessed from the Sun. And within it was the great mystery: The forces which are pre-eminently the forces of Michael have descended from the Heavens and are now upon the Earth. This was the profound secret which was known to Initiates in Schools such as those I spoke of yesterday, for example, the renowned School of Chartres. In earlier times, when men wished to discover the true nature of

Intelligence they had been obliged, in the Mystery Centres, to look upwards to the Sun. Now the Intelligence was upon the Earth, though not as yet very clearly perceptible. But gradually there was recognition that human beings were now evolving who possessed an individual intelligence of their own. One of those in European civilisation in whom the first sparks of personal thinking were alight was Johannes Scotus Erigena. I have often spoken of him. But there had been a few others, even before him, whose thoughts were not merely inspired, who no longer received revelations, but who could be called self-made thinkers. And now this individual thinking became more and more widespread.

There was a possibility in Earth-evolution of making this self-produced thinking serve a particular end. Consider what it represented: it was in actuality the sum-total of those impulses from Michael's realm in the Heavens which had found their way to the Earth. And for the time being Michael was called upon to allow the Intelligence to unfold without his participation. Not until the year 1879 was he to re-assume his rulership. In the meantime, the Intelligence developed in such a way that at the first stages he could not have exercised his dominion. His influences could not be exerted over men who were

unfolding their own, individual thoughts. His time had not yet come.

This profound secret of the descent of the pan-Intelligence in the evolution of humanity was known in a few Mystery Centres over in the East. And so, within these particular Oriental Mysteries, a few chosen pupils could be initiated into this secret by certain deeply spiritual, highly developed men. Through dispensations of a nature which it is difficult for the earthly intellect to comprehend, the illustrious Court of which I have spoken at the Goetheanum and in other places, came into touch with this secret of which certain Oriental Mysteries were fully cognisant. In the eighth and at the beginning of the ninth century, under the leadership of Haroun al Raschid, this Court wielded great power over in Asia. Haroun al Raschid was a product of Arabian culture, a culture tinged with Mohammedanism. The secret of which I have spoken found its way to some of Haroun al Raschid’s initiated Counsellors — or to those who possessed at least a certain degree of knowledge — and the brilliance of his Court was due to the fact that it had come in touch with this secret. At this Court were concentrated all the treasures of wisdom, of art, of the truths of religious life to be found in the East — coloured, of course, by Mohammedanism. In the days when, in

Europe, at the Court of Charlemagne who was a contemporary of Haroun al Raschid, men were occupied in collating the first rudiments of grammar and everything was still in a state of semi-barbarism, there flourished in Baghdad that brilliant centre of Oriental, Western Asiatic spiritual life. Haroun al Raschid gathered around him men who were conversant with the great traditions of the Oriental Mysteries. And he had by his side one particular Counsellor who had been an Initiate in earlier times and whose spiritual driving forces were still influenced by the previous incarnations. He was the organiser of all that was cultivated at the Court of Haroun al Raschid in the domains of geometry, chemistry, physics, music, architecture, and the other arts — above all, a distinguished art of poetry. In this renowned and scintillating assembly of sages, it was felt, more or less consciously: the earthly Intelligence that has come down from the Heavens upon the Earth must be placed in the service of Mohammedan spiritual life!

And now consider this: from the time of Mohammed, from the time of the early Caliphs onwards, Arabian culture was carried from Asia across North Africa into Europe, where it spread as the result of warlike campaigns. But in the wake of those who by means of

these campaigns spread Arabism as far even as Spain — France was affected by it and, spiritually, the whole of Western Europe — there also came outstanding personalities. The wars waged by the Frankish kings against the Moors, against Arabism, are known to all of you … but that is the external aspect, that is what happens in external history … much more important is it to know how the spiritual streams flow on perpetually within the evolution of mankind.

Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor passed through the gate of death. But after their life between death and rebirth they continued to pursue their earthly aims in remarkable ways. It was their aim to introduce Arabian modes of thinking into the European world with the help of the rudiments of the Intelligence now spreading in Europe. And so after Haroun al Raschid had passed through the gate of death, while his soul was traversing spiritual, starry worlds, we see his gaze directed unswervingly from Baghdad across Asia Minor, to Greece, Rome, Spain, France and then northwards to England. Throughout this life between death and rebirth his attention was directed to the South and West of Europe. And then Haroun al Raschid appeared again in a new incarnation — becoming Lord Bacon of Verulam. Bacon himself is the reincarnated Haroun al Raschid who in

the intervening time between death and rebirth had worked as I have just described.

But the other, the one who had been his wise Counsellor, chose a different direction — from Baghdad across the Black Sea, through Russia and then into Middle Europe. The two individualities took different paths and directions. Haroun al Raschid passed to his next earthly goal as Lord Bacon of Verulam; the wise Counsellor during his life between death and a new birth did not divert his gaze from the sphere where influences from the East can be increasingly potent, and he appeared again as Amos Comenius (Komenski), the great educational reformer and author of “Pan-Sophia.” And from the interworking of these two individualities who had once been together at the Court in Baghdad there subsequently arose in Europe something which unfolded — more or less at a distance from Christianity — in the form of Arabism derived from influences of that past time when the Intelligence had first fallen away from Michael on the Sun.

What came outwardly and physically to expression in wars was, as we know, repelled by the Frankish kings and the other European peoples. We see how the Arabian campaigns which with such a powerful

initial impetus were responsible for the spread of Mohammedan culture, were broken and brought to a halt in the West; we see Mohammedanism disappearing from the West of Europe. Nevertheless, divested of the outer forms it had assumed and the external culture it had founded, this later Arabism became *modern natural science*, and also became the basis of what Amos Comenius achieved for the world in the domain of pedagogy. And in this way the earthly Intelligence, 'garrisoned' as it were by Arabism, continued to spread right on into the seventeenth century.

Here we have indicated something that lies as sub-strata of the soil into which we to-day have to sow the seeds of Anthroposophy. We must ponder deeply over the inner and spiritual reality behind these things.

In Europe, while this stream was flowing over from Asia as the spiritual continuation of that Illustrious Court of Baghdad, Christianity was also developing and spreading. But the spread of Aristotelianism in Europe was fraught with great difficulties. The natural science of Aristotle had been carried to Asia by the mighty deeds of Alexander and the impulses flowing from Hellenistic spiritual life, but here it had been seized upon by Arabism. In Europe, within the

expanding Christian culture, Aristotelianism was at first known in a diluted form only. Then, in the manner which I have already indicated, Aristotelianism joined hands with Platonism — Platonism, which was based directly upon the ancient teachings of the Greek Mysteries.

But at the very outset, Aristotelianism spread in Europe by slow degrees while Platonism took the lead and prompted the establishment of schools, one of the most important being the School of Chartres. At Chartres, the scholars of whom I spoke yesterday — Bernard Sylvestris, Bernard of Chartres, John of Salisbury and, foremost among them all, Alanus ab Insulis — were all working in the twelfth century. In this School men spoke very differently from those whose teachings were merely an echo of Arabism. The teachings given in the School of Chartres were pure and genuine Christianity, illumined by the ancient Mystery-wisdom still remaining within reach of men. And then something of immense significance took place. The leading teachers of Chartres, who with their Platonism had penetrated deeply into the secrets of Christianity and who had no part in Arabism, went through the gate of death. Then there took place, for a brief period at the beginning of the thirteenth century, a great ‘heavenly conference.’ And when the most

outstanding of the teachers — foremost among them Alanus ab Insulis — had passed through death and were in the spiritual world, they united in a momentous cosmic deed with those who at that time were with them but who were destined in the very near future to come into earthly existence for the purpose of cultivating Aristotelianism in a new way. Among those preparing to descend were individualities who had participated with deep intensity of soul in the working of the Michael Impulse during the time of Alexander. And at the turn of the twelfth century we may picture, for it is in keeping with the truth, a gathering-together of souls who had just arrived in the spiritual world from places of Christian Initiation — of which the School of Chartres was one — and souls who were on the point of descending to the Earth. In the spiritual realms, these latter souls had preserved, not Platonism, but Aristotelianism, the *inner impulse of the Intelligence* deriving from the Michael Age in ancient times. Now, in the spiritual world, the souls gathered together … among them, too, were souls who could say: We were with Michael and together with him we witnessed the Intelligence streaming down from the Heavens upon the Earth; we were united with him too in the mighty cosmopolitan Deed enacted in earlier times when the Intelligence was still administered from the Cosmos,

when he was still the ruler and administrator of the Intelligence.

And now, for the time being, the teachers of Chartres handed over to the Aristotelians the administration and ordering of the affairs of the spiritual life on Earth. Those who were now to descend and were by nature fitted to direct the earthly, personal Intelligence, took over the guidance of spiritual life on Earth from the Platonists, who could work truly only when the Intelligence was being administered “from the Heavens.”

It was into the Dominican Order above all that those individualities in whose souls the Michael Impulse was still echoing on from the previous Age of Michael, found their way. And from the Dominican Order issued that Scholasticism which wrestled through many a bitter but glorious battle to master the true nature and operation of the Intelligence within the human mind. Deeply rooted in the souls of those founders of Dominican Scholasticism in the thirteenth century was this great question: What is taking place in the domain of Michael?

There were men, later on known as Nominalists, who said: Concepts and ideas are merely names, they have

no reality. The Nominalists were under an Ahrimanic influence, for their real aim was to banish Michael's dominion from the Earth. In asserting that ideas are only names and have no reality, their actual aim was to prevent Michael's dominion from prevailing on Earth. And at that time the Ahrimanic spirits whispered to those who would lend their ear: The Cosmic Intelligence has fallen away from Michael and is here, on the Earth: we will not allow Michael to resume his rulership over the Intelligence! … But in that heavenly conference — and precisely here lies its significance — Platonists and Aristotelians together formed a plan for the furtherance of the Michael Impulses. — In opposition to the Nominalists were the Realists of the Dominican Order who maintained: Ideas and thoughts are spiritual realities contained within the phenomena of the world, they are not merely nominal.

If one understands these things, one is often reminded of them in a really remarkable way. During my last years in Vienna, one of my acquaintances among other ordained priests was Vincenz Knauer, the author of the work, *Hauptprobleme der Philosophie*, which I have often recommended to Anthroposophists. In the nineteenth century he was still involved in this conflict between Nominalism and Realism. He was

trying to make it clear that Nominalism is fallacious and he had chosen a very apt example to illustrate his arguments. It is also given in his books. But I remember with deep satisfaction a certain occasion when I was walking with him along the Wahringstrasse in Vienna. We were speaking about Nominalism and Realism. With all his self-controlled enthusiasm which had something remarkable about it, something of the quality of genuine philosophy in contrast to the philosophy of others who had more or less lost this quality — Knauer said on that occasion: I always make it clear to my students that the Ideas made manifest in the things of the world have reality — and I tell them to think of a lamb and a wolf. The Nominalists would say: A lamb is muscle, bone, matter; a wolf is muscle, bone, matter. What receives objective existence in lamb-flesh as the form, the idea of the lamb — that is only a name. “Lamb” is a name there and not, as idea, a reality. Similarly, as idea, “wolf” is not anything real but only a name. But — Knauer went on — it is easy to refute the Nominalists for one need only say to them: Give a wolf nothing but lamb’s flesh to eat for a time and no other food whatever. If the idea “lamb” contains no reality, is only a name, and if the lamb is nothing but matter, the wolf would gradually become a lamb. But it does not do so! On the contrary, it goes on being the reality “wolf.” In what stands there before

us as the lamb, the idea “lamb” has, as it were, gathered the matter and brought it into the form. Similarly with the wolf: the idea “wolf” has gathered the matter and cast it into the form.

This was the fundamental issue in the conflict between the Nominalists and the Realists: the reality of what is apprehensible only by the intellect.

Thus we see that it was the task of the Dominicans to work in advance, at the right time, for the next Michael rulership. And whereas in accordance with the decisions of that heavenly conference at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Platonists — the teachers of Chartres, for example — remained in the spiritual world and had no incarnations of significance, the Aristotelians were to work at that time for the cultivation of the Intelligence, on Earth. And from Scholasticism — which only much later, in the modern age, was distorted, caricatured and made Ahrimanic by Rome — from Scholasticism there has proceeded all intellectual striving in so far as it has kept free from the influence of Arabism.

So at that time when these two streams of spiritual life are to be perceived in Middle and Western Europe: on the one side, the stream with which Bacon and

Amos Comenius were connected; on the other side, the stream of Scholasticism that was and is *Christian Aristotelianism* takes its place in the evolution of civilisation in order to prepare, as was its task, for the new Age of Michael. When, during the rulership of the preceding Archangels, the Schoolmen looked up into the spiritual realms they said to themselves: Michael is yonder in the heights; his rulership must be awaited. But some preparation must be made for the time when he once again becomes the Regent of all that which, through the dispensation of cosmic evolution, fell away from him in the Cosmos. This time must be prepared for! … And so a stream began to flow which, though diverted into a false channel through Ultramontanism, continued and carried with it the impulse of preparation proceeding from the thirteenth century.

It was a stream, therefore, whose source is Aristotelian and whose influence worked directly on the ordering of the Intelligence that was now in the earthly realm. With this stream is connected that of which I spoke yesterday, saying that one who had remained a little longer with Alanus ab Insulis in the spiritual world, came down as a Dominican and brought a message from Alanus ab Insulis to an older

Dominican who had descended to the Earth before him.

An intense will was present in the spiritual life of Europe *to take strong hold of the thoughts*. And in realms above the Earth these happenings led, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, to a great, far-reaching Act in the spiritual world where that which later on was to become *Anthroposophy* on the Earth was cast into mighty Imaginations. In the first half of the nineteenth century, and even for a short period at the end of the eighteenth, those who had been Platonists under the teachers of Chartres, who were now living between death and rebirth, and those who had established Aristotelianism on Earth and who had long ago passed through the gate of death — all of them were united in the heavenly realms in a great super-earthly Cult or Ritual. Through this Act all that in the twentieth century was to be spiritually established as the new Christianity after the beginning of the new Michael Age in the last third of the nineteenth century — all this was cast into mighty Imaginations.

Many drops trickled through to the Earth. Up above, in the spiritual world, in mighty, cosmic Imaginations, preparation was made for that creation of the Intelligence — an entirely spiritual creation — which

was then to come forth as Anthroposophy. What trickled through made a very definite impression upon *Goethe*, coming to him in the form, as it were, of little reflected miniatures. The mighty pictures up above were not within Goethe's ken; he elaborated these little miniature pictures in his Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily. Truly, it opens up a wonderful vista! The streams I have described flow on in such a way that they lead to those mighty Imaginations which take shape in the spiritual world under the guidance of Alanus ab Insulis and the others. Drops trickle through, and at the turn of the eighteenth century Goethe is inspired to write his Fairy Tale. It was, we might say, a first presentation of what had been cast in mighty Imaginations in the spiritual world at the beginning of the nineteenth, indeed by the end of the eighteenth century. In view of this great super-sensible Cult during the first half of the nineteenth century, it will not surprise you that my first Mystery Play, *The Portal of Initiation* — which in a certain respect aimed at giving dramatic form to what had thus been enacted at the beginning of the nineteenth century — became alike in outer structure to what Goethe portrayed in his Fairy Tale. For having lived in the super-earthly realms in Imaginative form, Anthroposophy was to come down to the Earth. Something came to pass in the super-earthly realms at

that time. Numbers of souls who in many different epochs had been connected with Christianity came together with souls who had received its influences less directly. There were those who had lived on Earth in the Age when the Mystery of Golgotha took place and also those who had lived on Earth before it. The two groups of souls united in order that in regions beyond the Earth, Anthroposophy might be prepared. The individualities who, as I said, were around Alanus ab Insulis, and those who within the Dominican stream had established Aristotelianism in Europe, were united, too, with Brunetto Latini, the great teacher of Dante. And in this host of souls there were very many of those who, having again descended to the Earth, are now coming together in the Anthroposophical Society. Those who feel the urge to-day to unite with one another in the Anthroposophical Society were together in super-sensible regions at the beginning of the nineteenth century in order to participate in that mighty Imaginative Cult of which I have spoken.

This too is connected with the karma of the Anthroposophical Movement. It is something that one discovers, not from any rationalistic observation of this Anthroposophical Movement in its external, earthly form only, but from observation of the threads that lead upwards into the spiritual realms. Then one

perceives how this Anthroposophical Movement *descends*. At the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries it is, in very truth, the “heavenly” Anthroposophical Movement. What Goethe transformed into little miniature images in the Fairy Tale of the Green Snake and the Beautiful Lily were drops that had trickled through. But it was to come down in the real sense in the last third of the nineteenth century, since when Michael has been striving — but now moving downwards from the Sun to the Earth — to take hold of the earthly Intelligence of men.

We know that since the Mystery of Golgotha Christ has been united with the Earth — with humanity on Earth. But, to begin with, He was not outwardly comprehended by human beings. We have seen also that in the age of Alexander the last phase of the rulership of Michael over the Cosmic Intelligence was taking place. By the eighth century A.D., the Cosmic Intelligence had descended to the Earth. In accordance with the agreements reached with the Platonists, those who were connected with Michael undertook to prepare this earthly Intelligence in Scholastic Realism in such a way that Michael would again be able to unite with it when, in the onward flow

of civilisation, he would assume his rulership at the end of the seventies of the nineteenth century.

What matters now is that the Anthroposophical Society shall take up this, its inner task — this task which is: not to contest Michael's rulership of human thinking! Here there can be no question of fatalism. Here it can only be said that men must work together with the Gods. Michael inspires men with his own being in order that there may appear on the Earth a spirituality consonant with the personal Intelligence of men, in order that men can be thinkers — and at the same time truly spiritual. For this and this alone is what Michael's dominion means. This is what must be wrestled for in the Anthroposophical Movement. And then those who are working to-day for the Anthroposophical Movement will appear again on Earth at the end of the twentieth century and will be united with the great teachers of Chartres. For according to the agreement reached in that heavenly conference at the beginning of the thirteenth century, the Aristotelians and the Platonists were to appear together, working for the ever-growing prosperity of the Anthroposophical Movement in the twentieth century, in order that at the end of this century, with Platonists and Aristotelians in unison, Anthroposophy may reach a certain culmination in earthly civilisation.

If it is possible to work in this way, in the way predestined by Michael, then Europe and modern civilisation will emerge from decline. But verily in no other way than this! The leading of civilisation out of decline is bound up with an understanding of Michael.

I have now led you towards an understanding of the Michael Mystery reigning over the thinking and the spiritual strivings of mankind. This means — as you can realise — that through Anthroposophy something must be introduced into the spiritual evolution of the Earth, for all kinds of demonic, Ahrimanic powers are taking possession of men. The Ahrimanic powers in many a human body were exultant in their confidence that it would no longer be possible for Michael to take over his rulership of the Cosmic Intelligence which had fallen down to the Earth. And this exultation was particularly strong in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Ahriman already believed: Michael will not again recover his Cosmic Intelligence which made its way from the heavens to the Earth. And this exultation was particularly strong in the middle of the nineteenth century, when Ahriman already believed that Michael would not again recover his Cosmic Intelligence which made its way from the Heavens to the Earth. Verily, great and mighty issues are at stake! For this reason it is not to be wondered at that those

who stand in the midst of this battle have to go through many extraordinary experiences.

Stranger things have been said about the Anthroposophical Movement than about any other spiritual Movement. The curious statements made indicate in themselves that with its spirituality and its connection with the Mystery of Golgotha, it is beyond the comprehension even of some of the most enlightened minds of the present day. — Does anyone ever tell you that he has seen a man who is black and white at the same time? I hardly think you would regard him as sane if he said such a thing to you. But to-day people are quite capable of writing in a similar strain about the Anthroposophical Movement. In his book, *The Great Secret* [*Le Grand Secret*. Bibliothèque Charpentier, 1921. The passages concerned have been translated from the *German* version of Maeterlinck's book from which Dr. Steiner was quoting. The original French of these passages will be found on page 182 of the present volume.], Maurice Maeterlinck, for example, taking me to be the pillar of the Anthroposophical Movement, applies in regard to myself a kind of logic entirely similar to that used by someone who claims to have seen a man who is black and white, a European and a Moor at the same time. Now a man can be one of the two, but certainly not

both simultaneously! Yet Maeterlinck says: “What we read in the Vedas, says Rudolf Steiner, one of the most erudite and also one of the most confusing among contemporary occultists …” If somebody were to say he had seen a man who was a European and a Moor at the same time, he would be considered crazy; but Maeterlinck uses the words “erudite” and “confusing” in juxtaposition. He also says: “Rudolf Steiner who, when he does not lose himself in visions — plausible, perhaps, but incapable of verification — of the prehistoric ages, and in astral jargon concerning life on other planets, is a clear and shrewd thinker who has thrown remarkable light on the meaning of this judgement” (he is referring to Osirification) “and of the identification of the soul with God.” In other words, therefore: when Rudolf Steiner is not talking about Anthroposophy, he is a clear and shrewd thinker. Maeterlinck allows himself to say this — and other remarkable things too, for example the following: “Steiner has applied his intuitive methods, which amount to a kind of transcendental psychometry, in order to reconstruct the history of the Atlanteans and to reveal to us what takes place on the sun, the moon and in other worlds. He describes the successive transformations of the entities which become men, and he does so with such assurance that we ask ourselves, having followed him with interest through

the introductions which denote an extremely well-balanced, logical and comprehensive mind, if he has suddenly gone mad or if we are dealing with a hoaxer or with a genuine seer.” … Now just think what this means. — Maeterlinck states that when I write books, the introductions are admittedly the product of an “extremely well-balanced, logical and comprehensive mind.” But when he reads on he does not know whether I have suddenly gone mad or whether I am a hoaxer or a genuine seer. Well, after all I have not written only books! It is always my custom to write an introduction to each book first. Very well, then … I write a book. Maeterlinck reads the introduction and I seem to him to have an “extremely well-balanced, logical and comprehensive mind.” Then he reads on, and I turn into someone who makes him say: I don’t know whether Rudolf Steiner has suddenly gone mad or whether he is a hoaxer or a seer. Then it happens again … I write a second book: when he reads the introduction Maeterlinck again accepts me as having an “extremely well-balanced, logical and comprehensive mind.” Then he reads the further contents and again does not know whether I am a lunatic or a hoaxer or a seer. And so it goes on … But suppose everybody were to say: when I read your books you seem, at the beginning, to be very clever, balanced and logical, but then you suddenly go mad!

People who are logical when they begin to write and then as they write on suddenly become crazy, must indeed be extraordinary creatures! In the next book they switch round, are logical at the beginning and later on again lunatics! There seems to be a rhythmical sequence … well, after all there *are* rhythms in the world!

Such examples indicate how the most enlightened minds of the present age receive what must be established as the Michael Epoch in the world and what has to be done in order that the Cosmic Intelligence which in accordance with the World-Order fell away from Michael in the eighth century A.D., may again be found within earthly humanity. The whole Michael tradition must be renewed. Michael with his feet upon the Dragon — it is right to contemplate this picture which portrays Michael the Warrior, defending the Cosmic Spirit against the Ahrimanic Powers under his feet.

This battle, more than any other, is laid in the *human heart*. There, within the hearts of men, it is and has been waged since the last third of the nineteenth century. Decisive indeed will be what human hearts do with this Michael Impulse in the world in the course of the twentieth century. And in the course of the

twentieth century, when the first century after the end of Kaliyuga has elapsed, humanity will either stand at the grave of all civilisation — or at the beginning of that Age when in the souls of men who in their hearts ally Intelligence with Spirituality, Michael’s battle will be fought out to victory.

Karmic Relationships, VI: Lecture IX

The rulership of Michael in its cosmic, spiritual aspect shows us, as you will have gathered from what I have already told you, that he occupies a special position among those spiritual Beings whom we call the Archangeloi. And precisely because of its bearing upon the central theme of these lectures, we shall appreciate the significance of the fact that in the centuries preceding the founding of Christianity, Michael sent his impulses — his 'cosmopolitan' impulses — from the Sun to the Earth. As time went on, these cosmopolitan impulses disappeared: the Cosmic Intelligence fell away from Michael and by the eighth century A.D. had arrived on Earth. In earthly evolution we then find men whose thoughts were produced out of themselves, who are, as it were, 'self-made' thinkers. This personal, self-engendered thinking was then cultivated in preparation for the next reign of Michael. As we have seen, the wise Masters of the School of Chartres worked in unison towards this end with those souls who had been connected with the previous reign of Michael and who were predestined to develop the once cosmic but now earthly Intelligence. They were predestined to carry their work on into the nineteenth century when — at

first in the spiritual world — it became possible, through the Imaginative Cult I have described to you, to prepare for what the Anthroposophical Movement was intended to achieve.

Since the last third of the nineteenth century we have been living in the initial stage of the new reign of Michael; throughout this time, and above all in our own day, preparation has to be made for what must come to pass in the twentieth century. For before the end of this present century a considerable number of human beings who have unfolded real understanding of Anthroposophy will have passed through a briefer period between death and rebirth than is usual and will again be united on the Earth under the leadership of those who were the Masters of Chartres and with those who have remained in direct connection with the sovereignty of Michael. This will take place in order that under the spiritual guidance of these two groups of beings the final, hallowed impulse may be given for the development of the spiritual life on Earth.

Anthroposophy can only be of real significance for those who want to ally themselves with it, when with a certain inner, reverent fervour they become conscious that they may indeed have their place within a sphere

of happenings like those described yesterday. This realisation will not only kindle inner enthusiasm but also be a source of strength, giving us the knowledge that it is our task to be the continuers of what was once alive in the ancient Mysteries.

But this consciousness must be, and indeed can be, deepened in every direction. For in the light of what was said yesterday, we look back to the time when, united with a host of super-earthly Beings in the spiritual realm of the Sun, Michael sent down upon Earth those impulses and signs which inspired the deeds of Alexander on the one side and the Aristotelian philosophy on the other. Out of these impulses arose the last phase of the *inspired* Intelligence on Earth. Then, together with human souls who on his behalf carried out this work on Earth, together with his spiritual hosts and the hosts of human souls around these leading spirits, Michael witnessed the Mystery of Golgotha from his abode on the Sun. Truly our souls may be stirred by picturing that moment when Michael, together with a host of Angeloi, Archangeloi and human souls, witnessed the Christ departing from the Sun in order to enter the bodily sheaths of a man and, through what He could experience in a human body on Earth, to unite Himself with the further evolution of humanity. But for Michael

himself this was at the same time the sign that henceforward he must allow the heavenly Intelligence, hitherto in his keeping, to stream down like holy rain upon the Earth, to fall away gradually from the Sun. And when the ninth century of the Christian era had come, those around Michael perceived: The content of what had been guarded hitherto under Michael, is now down below, upon the Earth.

What mattered now was that in complete harmony with the sovereignty of Michael there should arise all that came into the world through the Masters of Chartres and also through certain chosen souls in the Order of the Dominicans. In short, there came about the phase of evolution which from the beginning of the fifteenth century inaugurated the epoch of the Consciousness Soul — it is the phase of evolution in which we ourselves are living. Approximately in the first third of the preceding epoch, that is to say during the first third of the epoch of the Intellectual or Mind-Soul, as an outcome of Alexandrianism, the super-earthly Intelligence had spread in Asia, Africa and parts of Europe. Following upon this, came the time when Michael, the foremost Archangel-Spirit of the Sun, knew that the Cosmic Intelligence was passing away from this realm, away from his administration: the conditions were now established for the

development of the Intelligence on the Earth. A further phase of development on Earth began in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries of the Christian era, when Gabriel became the administrator — as I explained in my previous lecture — while Michael was free from his earlier obligations in the Cosmos.

Michael was now in an unusual position. In other circumstances, when an Archangelos is not himself the ruling Spirit in the affairs of Earth, he lets his impulses pour, nevertheless, into what the other Archangeloi are bringing to pass. The impulses from all the seven consecutive Archangelic rulerships flow in continually — it is simply that one rulership predominates in a particular age. When, for example, in earlier epochs of evolution, Gabriel was the leading Spirit, it was paramountly those impulses of which he was the actual ruler that flowed into earthly evolution; but the other Archangeloi were also at work. Now, however, when Gabriel was exercising his dominion, Michael was in the unusual position of being unable to participate from the Sun in the affairs of the Earth. Truly it is a strange position for a ruling Archangelos to perceive that the activity he has been wielding through long ages has, for the time being, come to an end. And so it was that Michael said to those who belonged to him: For the time during which we cannot

send impulses to the Earth (it is the period which ended about the year 1879) we must set about a special task, a task within the realm of the Sun. It was to be possible for those souls who have been led by their karma into the Anthroposophical Movement, to behold in the realm of the Sun the deeds performed by Michael and his hosts while Gabriel was holding sway upon the Earth.

This was detached from the otherwise regular sequence of deeds taking place between gods and men. The souls connected with Michael — the leading souls of Alexander's time, the leading Dominicans with those of less eminence who had gathered around them, and a large number of aspiring human souls in association with the leading spirits — these souls felt torn away from the age-long connection with the spiritual world. There, in super-sensible worlds, those human souls predestined to become Anthroposophists experienced something never previously experienced by human souls between death and rebirth in the super-earthly realm. In earlier times during the period between death and a new birth, the karma for the future earthly existence had been elaborated by human souls in connection with leading spiritual Beings. But no karma had ever previously been elaborated in the same way as was the karma of those

predestined to become Anthroposophists. Never before in the realm of the Sun between death and rebirth had there been accomplished such work as was possible under the leadership of Michael when, as was now the case, he was free of the concerns of the Earth.

Something came to pass in the super-sensible worlds. It was something that lies implanted deep down in the hearts of the majority of Anthroposophists to-day, although in the unconscious, wrapt in sleep or dream. And the Anthroposophist speaks truly when he says to himself: Within my heart there lies a secret although I am yet unconscious of it. It is a secret mystery wherein are reflected the deeds of Michael in realms beyond the Earth when, before my present incarnation, I was serving him. In the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries Michael, being free of his wonted tasks, was enabled to work in a special way, and I was working under him.

Michael gathered his hosts, he gathered from the realms of the Angeloi and the Archangeloi the super-sensible Beings who belonged to him, but he gathered, too, human souls who in one way or another had been connected with him. And thus there arose a kind of School — a great and ever-widening super-sensible School. In the same way that a kind of

heavenly Conference had taken place at the beginning of the thirteenth century between those who worked together as Platonists and Aristotelians, a super-sensible tuition now took place, from the fifteenth into the eighteenth centuries, under the direct leadership of Michael — a super-sensible schooling in which the great Teacher, ordained by cosmic decree, was Michael himself. Thus, before the super-sensible cult that took its course during the first half of the nineteenth century in mighty Imaginations, as I have told you, numbers of human souls had already received a super-sensible schooling whose results they now carry subconsciously within them. These results come to expression in the urge felt by such people to come to Anthroposophy. The urge that brings them to Anthroposophy is indeed the outcome of this schooling. And it can truly be said: At the end of the fifteenth century, Michael gathered his hosts of gods and of human souls in the realm of the Sun and gave them teaching which extended over long periods of time. This teaching was to somewhat the following effect. —

Since the human race has peopled the Earth in human form, Mysteries have existed upon the Earth: Sun Mysteries, Mercury Mysteries, Venus Mysteries, Mars Mysteries, Jupiter Mysteries, Saturn Mysteries.

Into these Mysteries the gods poured their secrets; in these Mysteries men were initiated when they were fit for Initiation. Thus it has been possible for the human being on the Earth to know what proceeds on Saturn, on Jupiter, on Mars and so forth, to know, too, how happenings in these spheres work into the evolution of mankind on Earth. Always there have been Initiates who, in the Mysteries, communed with the Gods. With an old, instinctive clairvoyance, these Initiates received the impulses coming to them in the Mysteries. But even meagre traditions (thus spoke Michael to those who belonged to him) even meagre traditions of this have almost vanished from the Earth. The impulses can no longer stream into the Earth. It is only in the lowest-lying region — that of physical procreation — it is there and there alone that Gabriel still has the power to let the Moon-influences flow into the evolution of humanity. The ancient traditions have almost disappeared from the Earth and therewith the possibility to nurture and cultivate the impulses streaming into the subconscious life and into the differently constituted bodily natures of men. We, however, turn our gaze back to all that once was brought in the Mysteries as a gift of the Heavens to men; we survey this wonderful tableau. And also we look downwards across the flow of the ages. And there we find the places of the Mysteries, we see how the

heavenly wisdom streamed into these Mysteries, how men were initiated, how from our hallowed realm in the Sun the Cosmic Intelligence poured down to men in such a way that the great Teachers of humanity received truly spiritual ideas, thoughts, concepts. These ideas and thoughts were inspired into them from our hallowed realm in the Sun. These inspirations have vanished from the Earth. We see them only when we look back into epochs of antiquity … stage by stage we see them disappearing from earthly evolution during the time of Alexander and its aftermath — and down there below we see the Intelligence that has now become earthly, spreading gradually among men. But the vista has remained with us. We yet behold the secrets that were once divulged to the Initiates of the Mysteries. Let us bring this fully into our consciousness! Let us bring it to the consciousness of those spiritual Beings who are around me, those Beings who never appear in earthly bodies but have their existence only in an etheric form. But let us bring it, too, to those souls who have often lived on Earth in physical bodies, those who are actually there now, and who belong to the Michael community — let us bring it to the consciousness of these human souls. We will image forth the great Initiation-teaching which once streamed down in the ancient fashion, through the Mysteries, to the Earth.

We will present this to the souls of those who in their life of Intelligence were linked with Michael. —

And then — if I may use an earthly, and in such a context an almost trivial expression — then the ancient Initiation-Wisdom was “worked through.” In a great and comprehensive heavenly School, Michael taught the contents of what he was now no longer able to administer himself. It was an overwhelming deed — something that in the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth centuries and on into the eighteenth, caused such profound disquiet and alarm to the Ahrimanic demons on Earth that a remarkable thing happened. Between heavenly deeds and earthly deeds at this time polaric contrast was established. In the heights, in the spiritual world, there was this sublime School, gathering together the old Initiate-Wisdom in a new form, calling up into the Intelligence-filled consciousness, into the Consciousness Soul of predestined human beings between death and rebirth, what in earlier times had been man’s treasury of wisdom in the Intellectual Soul, the Sentient Soul, and so forth. In inner words, seeming stern in many respects when they were uttered, Michael placed before those who belonged to him the picture of cosmic relationships, the anthroposophical relationships. These souls received teaching which

unveiled the secrets of worlds. Below, on the Earth, the Ahrimanic spirits were at work. — And here it is necessary to point without reserve to a secret. Outwardly regarded it will seem unacceptable in face of modern culture, but it is nevertheless a divine secret and one of which Anthroposophists must be cognisant in order to be able to lead civilisation in the right way to the end of the twentieth century.

While Michael above was teaching his hosts, there was founded in the realm lying immediately below the surface of the Earth, a kind of sub-earthly, Ahrimanic school. The Michael School was in the super-earthly world; in the region beneath our feet — for the spiritual is actively at work in the sub-earthly region also — the opposing Ahrimanic school was founded. And in that particular period, when no impulses were streaming down from Michael bringing heavenly inspiration to the Intelligence, when the Intelligence on the Earth was, for the time being, left to itself, the Ahrimanic hosts strove all the harder to send their impulses up from below into the development of the Intelligence in mankind. It is a truly overwhelming picture. The Earth’s surface — Michael above, teaching his hosts, revealing to them in mighty, cosmic language the ancient Initiate-Wisdom, and below, the Ahrimanic school in the sub-strata of the

Earth. Upon the Earth, the Intelligence that has fallen from the Heavens is unfolding. For the time being, Michael holds his School in heavenly isolation from the earthly world — no impulses stream down from above — and there below are the Ahrimanic powers, sending up their impulses with all the greater strength.

There have always been souls incarnated on the Earth who were aware of this sinister situation. Anyone conversant with the spiritual history of this epoch, especially the spiritual history of Europe, will everywhere find evidence of the fact that there were individuals here and there — often quite simple men — who had an inkling of this sinister situation: abandonment of humanity by the Michael rulership, and impulses rising from below like demonic vapours, striving to conquer the Intelligence.

It is remarkable how closely the revelations of wisdom are bound up with the *human being*, if all that springs from such revelations is to be beneficial. This is the secret which must here be touched upon. — A human being whose task it is to proclaim the Michael wisdom feels that in a certain respect he is following the right course when he tries to put into words, when he wrestles to find the terminology to express, what is, in very truth, the wisdom of Michael. Such a one feels,

too, that he is further justified when with his own hand he writes down this wisdom; for then the flow of the spiritual is directly connected with him and streams, as it were, into the forms of what he is writing, into what he is doing. Thus he willingly communicates this wisdom to others in the form of reading material when it is written down by him in his own hand. But when through mechanical means, through the medium of the printed book, he sees his work duplicated, he has a feeling of uneasiness. This has to be endured, for the method is in keeping with our age. Nevertheless, the feeling of uneasiness is never absent from one who stands within the life of the Spirit together with what he has to proclaim.

In connection with the lecture yesterday, somebody has asked me whether, as Swedenborg has hinted, the letter (*Buchstabe*) is not, after all, the ‘last outflow’ of the spiritual life. That indeed is so! It is the last outflow of the spiritual life so long as it flows through a *man* in a continuous stream from the Spirit. But when it is fixed by mechanical means as it were from the other pole, when it comes before the eyes of men as printed letters, it becomes an Ahrimanic spiritual power. For, strange to say, it is that Ahrimanic school which worked in opposition to the School of Michael in the fifteenth, sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth

centuries — it is that Ahrimanic school which brought the art of printing, with all its consequences, to Europe. Printing can be the soil from which demonic powers, well adapted to combat the rulership of Michael, may spring.

An Anthroposophist must be able to perceive the significance and meaning of realities in life; he must recognise that printing is a spiritual power but precisely that spiritual power which Ahriman has placed in opposition to Michael. Therefore to those who in his School at that time were being taught by him, Michael constantly gave this warning: When you descend again to the Earth in order to give effect to what has here been prepared, gather men around you, make known the essentials by word of mouth, and do not regard the ‘literary’ effects produced in the world through the printed book as of foremost importance. — Hence the more intimate method of working from man to man is more truly in accord with Michael’s way. If, instead of working merely through books, we meet together with one another, letting the impulses flow into us in the sphere of the *human* and the personal, and only then using the books as aids to memory, shall we be able to inaugurate the stream that — imponderably at first — is destined to flow through the Anthroposophical Society. It is inevitable that we

should make use of books for we must also become masters of this art of Ahriman’s — otherwise we should be delivered into his hands. We must be able to reckon truly with the Ahrimanic spirit of the times, otherwise tremendous power would be given to him. Thus it is not a matter of merely ousting the printed book but of bringing it into relationship with what works in a directly human way. So it would not be right, as a result of what I have just put before you, to say: ‘Away with all the anthroposophical books!’ Thereby we should be delivering up the art of printing to the most powerful enemies of the Michael wisdom; we should be making it impossible for our anthroposophical work to thrive, as thrive it must, until the end of the century is reached. What we must do is to ennoble the art of printing through our reverence for the Michael wisdom. For what is it that by way of the art of printing Ahriman is intent upon achieving in opposition to Michael? Ahriman is intent upon conquest of the Intelligence. There is evidence of it everywhere to-day. Conquest of the Intelligence, which asserts itself wherever conditions are favourable. And when do we find the Ahrimanic spirits most potent in their attacks against the coming age of Michael? We find them at those times when a diminution or lowering of the consciousness takes place in human beings. These Ahrimanic spirits then take possession of human

consciousness, they entrench themselves within it. For instance, in the year 1914, many individuals in a lowered state of consciousness became entangled in events which led to the outbreak of the terrible World War. And within the lowered consciousness of such men the hosts of Ahriman promoted the World War — promoted it by way of human beings. The real causes of that War will never be brought to light by documents contained in archives. No, one must rather look deeply into history and perceive that there, at some particular point, stood an influential personality, at this point another, and there again another — and these men were in a lowered state of consciousness. That was the opportunity for Ahriman to take possession of them. And if you want to realise how easy it is in our age for men to be possessed by Ahriman, you need think only of this example.

What happened, when, with the printed volumes they had brought with them, the Europeans arrived in North America in times when Indians were still to be found in the eastern part of the land? When the Indians saw these volumes with their strange characters of script they took the letters to be little demons. They had the right perception for these things. They were terribly frightened when they looked at all these little demonic entities — a, b, and

the rest, as they appear in print. For these letters, reproduced in such a different way, do contain something that fascinates, something that casts a spell over the modern mind; and only the good outlook of Michael, with eyes open to the human element in the proclamation of wisdom, can lead men beyond the danger of this lure. But evil things may happen in this domain.

At this point let me say the following. — There are certain secrets connected with the vision of world-existence which cannot be penetrated before a somewhat advanced age in life. Each particular period of life enables one who possesses Initiation-science to behold the individual secrets of existence. Thus between the twenty-first and forty-second years of life — not before — such a man is able to gaze into the Sun-existence; between the forty-second and forty-ninth years into the Mars secrets; between the forty-ninth and fifty-sixth years into the Jupiter secrets. But to behold the secrets of worlds in their interconnections, one must have passed the age of sixty-three. [See *True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigations*. Lecture 6. (Rudolf Steiner Press.)] Therefore before I myself was in this position, I should not have been able to speak of certain things of which I now speak without any reserve. Before the vision can

penetrate into anything related to the Michael Mysteries, to the influences working from the spiritual realm of the Sun, one must look upwards from the Earth through the Saturn existence into the secrets of worlds. One must be able to experience, to live within that twilight of the spiritual world which proceeds from the ruler of Saturn, from Oriphiel, who was the leading Archangelos at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha and who will again assume the leadership when the Michael Age has run its course.

To such vision, however, shattering, overwhelming truths connected with the present age are revealed. As we have seen, the art of printing spread over the Earth through the Ahrimanic school working in opposition to the School of Michael, and because of this, ‘authorship’ on a wide scale has arisen on the Earth. Who, then, were ‘authors’ in earlier times, before printing was in existence? They were men whose writings could be known only in the narrowest circles, in circles, moreover, that were properly prepared. Into how many hands did a book find its way before printing was in use? Think of the following, and you will be able to judge how things were. A kind of substitute for the later art of printing was already in existence in ancient Chinese civilisation and had reached a high level of perfection. A kind of printing

art had been established there — also in an Age when Michael was ruling above; and when below there was an Ahrimanic anti-rulership. But nothing very much came of it. In those times the power of Ahriman was not yet so powerful and he was still unable to make really effective attempts to wrest from Michael the rulership of the Intelligence. The attempt was renewed in the time of Alexander but then again was unsuccessful.

Ahriman’s influence in the printing art of the modern age, however, has assumed deep significance. Authorship has, so to speak, been popularised. And something has become possible, something that is as great in a wonderful, brilliant, dazzling way as, on the other hand, the necessity is great to receive it in absolute equableness of soul and to estimate it according to its true significance. First attempts have been made, attempts which from Michael’s realm may be characterised by saying: Ahriman has appeared as an author. For Michael and his circle, this is a deeply significant happening to-day. Ahriman as an author! Not only have men been possessed by him as I indicated in the case of the outbreak of the War, but in that he manifested on Earth through human souls, he himself appeared as an author. That he is a most brilliant author need be no cause for astonishment; for

Ahriman is a mighty, all-embracing spirit. True, he is not by nature fitted to promote the evolution of mankind on the Earth according to the intentions of the good gods; he opposes it. Nevertheless in his own sphere he is not only a thoroughly useful but a beneficent power — for beings who on one level of world-happenings are benefactors are exceedingly harmful on another. It need not be assumed, therefore, that in characterising the works of Ahriman they must come in for unqualified rebuke. Provided one is conscious of what they are, one can even admire them. But the Ahrimanic character *must* be recognised!

Michael teaches how recognition can be made to-day if men are willing to listen to him. For the Michael schooling has worked on and still to-day it is possible for men to draw near it. Then it teaches how Ahriman himself as an author has made attempts — first attempts of a deeply shattering, deeply tragic character — working, of course, through a human being. Nietzsche's *Anti-Christ*, his *Ecce Homo*, his autobiography, and the annotations in *The Will to Power* — those most brilliant chapters of modern authorship with their often devilish content — Ahriman was their writer, exercising his sovereignty over that which in letters on the Earth can be made

subject to his dominion through the art of printing! Ahriman has already begun to appear as an author and his work will continue. On Earth in the future alertness will be necessary in order that not all the productions of authorship shall be deemed of the same calibre. Works written by men will appear, but some individuals at least must be aware that a Being is training himself to become one of the most brilliant authors in the immediate future: that Being is Ahriman! Human hands will write the works, but Ahriman will be the author. As once the Evangelists of old were inspired by super-sensible Beings and wrote down their works through this inspiration, so will the works of Ahriman be penned by men.

The further history of the evolution of humanity will present itself in two aspects. Endeavours must be made to propagate in the earthly realm — to the greatest extent possible — what was once taught by Michael in super-sensible Schools to souls predestined to receive it; endeavours must be made in the Anthroposophical Society to be reverently mindful of this knowledge and to impart it to those who will be incarnated in the coming times, until the end of the century has arrived. And then, many of those who for the first time are learning of these things to-day will come down to the Earth again. The time will be short.

But meanwhile on Earth much that has been written by Ahriman will appear.

One task of Anthroposophists is this: steadfastly to cultivate the Michael Wisdom, to bring courageous hearts to this Michael Wisdom, and to realise that the first penetration of the earthly Intelligence by the spiritual sword of Michael consists in this sword being wielded by those into whose hearts the Michael wisdom has found its way. And so the picture of Michael in a new form may inspire each single Anthroposophist — Michael standing there within the hearts of men, beneath his feet the production of Ahrimanic authorship. Such a picture need not be painted in that external form in which during the time of the Dominicans the image was often fixed — above, the Dominican Schoolmen with their books, below, crushed under their feet, the heathen wisdom as represented by Averröes, Avicenna and the rest. Wherever it was a matter of portraying the battle waged by Christian Scholasticism against heathendom, these pictures are to be found. But in the spirit there must be this other picture: Devotion to Michael as he enters into the world, laying hold of the Intelligence upon Earth; and — in order that one may not be bedazzled — alertness with regard to the brilliant work of Ahriman as an author through the

whole of the twentieth century. Ahriman will write his works in the strangest places — but they will be there indeed — and he is preparing pupils for his purposes. Even in our day, much in the subconscious is being schooled in such a way that souls will be able to incarnate again quickly and become instruments for Ahriman as an author. He will write in all domains: in philosophy, in poetry, in the sphere of the drama and the epic; in medicine, law, sociology. Ahriman will write in all these domains!

This will be the situation into which mankind will be led when the end of the century is reached. And those who are still young to-day will witness many samples of how Ahriman appears as an author. In every sphere watchfulness will be needed — and reverent enthusiasm for the Michael Wisdom.

If we can permeate ourselves with these things, if we can feel ourselves standing within the spiritual life in the sense of the indications here given, then, my dear friends, we shall place ourselves as true Anthroposophists into the civilisation of the present time. Then, maybe, we shall realise more and more deeply that a new Impulse is going out from the Christmas Foundation at the Goetheanum, that in truth only now are there being presented to the

Anthroposophical Society things whereby this Society can see itself as it were in a great cosmic mirror — in which the individual, too, together with the karma which leads him into the Anthroposophical Society, can see himself reflected.

That is what I wanted to lay on your hearts in these lectures. For it is to *hearts* that the words are chiefly spoken. The hearts of men must become the helpers of Michael in the conquering of the Intelligence that has fallen to the Earth. Just as once the old Serpent was destined to be crushed by Michael, so must the Intelligence that has now become the Serpent be conquered by Michael, be spiritualised by Michael. And whenever the Serpent appears in its unspiritualised state, made Ahrimanic, it must be recognised through the vigilance, the alertness which belongs to the anthroposophical spirit and is developed through the Michael-like tenor of soul.

Karmic Relationships, VIII: Lecture I

For centuries now men have become less and less accustomed to turn their minds to the spiritual world. We say, and rightly say, that the last few centuries have inaugurated an age of materialism which has set its stamp not only upon man's thinking but also upon his will, his actions, indeed upon his whole life. And we in the Anthroposophical Society realise that the purpose of this Society is to awaken forces whereby men will be released from their bondage to matter, from influences which make them deny the reality of the Spiritual.

But if the Anthroposophical Movement is to provide the impulse that is needed in the evolution of humanity, all the teachings, all the treasures of wisdom which have for many years been flowing through it must be applied with real earnestness. We must ponder deeply on the realities of man's life to-day. He comes into the world through birth with traits inherited from parents and ancestors, he is influenced and guided by current views and opinions and at a certain age he becomes alert and awake to the life that surrounds him in the outer world. He pays attention to the ideas, the thoughts, the deeds, the

impulses to be found in his environment; he tries to understand his place as a member of a particular nation, as a member of humanity in general, and so forth.

In the Anthroposophical Movement we accept the enlightening truth that all of us who are present here have passed through earlier lives on the earth. We have carried into this present life the fruits of those earlier lives. And we are mindful not only of what we are within our present nation, within modern humanity, but we realise that we have already passed through a number of incarnations on the earth and that in other conditions of existence between death and rebirth we have so worked at the development of the Self, the Ego, that we have made ourselves what we are to-day.

But in his everyday consciousness man does not realise that these previous earthly lives must also be taken into account. Nor will any progress be possible unless he studies the whole of life in the light of karma, of destiny taking shape from one earthly life to another. The historical life of humanity must, above all, be studied from this point of view. We say to ourselves that here or there an outstanding personality appeared, one who accomplished great

things for mankind. Do we really understand such a personality if we merely consider that he was born at a certain time and then follow the experiences and events of that single life? If the teachings available in the Anthroposophical Movement are taken seriously, our attitude must rather be this: There we see a personality who in his incarnation now or in the past, represents the fruits of earlier earthly lives, and we cannot really understand him without taking those earlier lives into account.

If this point of view is seriously adopted, however, our conception of history will be radically different from that prevailing to-day. It is customary nowadays to recount the facts and events of the various epochs of human history — in connection, let us say, with a statesman, a painter or some other outstanding figure. Accounts are given of his life and deeds on earth, but the idea that earlier earthly lives play over into a given incarnation is never seriously considered. Yet there can be no real understanding of history without the knowledge that what happens in a later time is the fruit carried over by the human being himself from earlier into later epochs. The human beings who are living to-day or who lived centuries ago were also on the earth in past ages and have carried over into this

later epoch the results of what they thought and experienced in those bygones times.

How, for example, are we to understand a phenomenon of the present age as disturbing as the following? — For well nigh two thousand years, all that was inaugurated through the Mystery of Golgotha has been with us; ever since then the Christ Impulse has been working in European and Western civilisation. But in the very same world through which the Christ Impulse has passed, warming the hearts and enlightening the minds of men, a different element has taken root. In that same world are to be found the results of all that is inculcated even into our children through the introduction of modern science into the schools, all the ideas and views presented to us by the newspapers every morning at breakfast. Then again, think of the prevailing conceptions of the nature and being of man, think of all that science has introduced into public life, all that art and other branches of culture have produced .. . it cannot be said that these things are permeated by the Christ Impulse. They are there side-by-side with the Christ Impulse. Indeed many men are at pains to prevent the influence of the Christ Impulse finding its way into the domains of anatomy, physiology, biology or history, and to keep all such fields of knowledge separate and apart.

Why is it so? As long as we merely speak of some personality who was, let us say, a scientist, who received this or that kind of education, who engaged in some form of research, or again, if we merely speak of a statesman as having been a Liberal or a Conservative, we shall not understand how the Christ Impulse can flow through modern civilisation simultaneously with elements that need have nothing whatever in common with Christianity. How can this be? We shall, however, be able to understand if we study the different earthly lives of outstanding personalities, for we shall realise then that human beings carry over into later epochs the thoughts, the impulses of will they unfolded in their earlier incarnations.

We observe personalities in history who have had great influence upon our own epoch. Think, for example, of one whose influence upon external life, especially in domains where science plays a part, has been deep and far-reaching — I am referring to Bacon, Lord Bacon of Verulam. He appears in the world and details of his life are well known. We see him working in the sphere of Christian civilisation. Yet there is no trace whatever of the Christian Impulse in his writings. Bacon of Verulam might equally have arisen from some non-Christian civilisation. What he actually says

about Christianity is extremely superficial compared with the real impulse that was within him. The same characteristic is to be perceived in Bacon the scientist, Bacon the philosopher, Bacon the statesman.

Again, think of a personality like Darwin. Darwin was a good and sincere Christian, but there was no connection whatever between his Christianity and his ideas about the evolution of animals and man. The trend of thought in both cases is altogether different from that of the Christian Impulse.

We shall make no headway unless we ask ourselves: What can there have been in the earlier earthly lives, let us say of Bacon, or of Darwin? What had they carried over from their earlier incarnations?

If the Anthroposophical Society is to fulfil its purpose, such questions must no longer remain abstract. The mere knowledge that man lives many times on the earth, that one thing or another is carried over from an earlier into a later life will not lead us far. There is of course nothing against reflections of this kind; they amount to no more than a general belief and are innocuous. But what we must do is to study the concrete realities of man’s being and understand

his life in some later epoch in the light of what he was in earlier incarnations.

We shall now proceed to study these matters, beginning with an example taken from history, in order to tackle the subject of karma in all earnestness. Observing the progress of evolution revealed by civilisation, by the deeds of humanity, we shall be able to perceive how individuals carry over into a later epoch what they acquired and made their own in an earlier one.

For example: Bacon of Verulam appears in a certain age; Darwin appears in a later epoch. We discern a certain similarity between them. Superficial study merely sets out to discover how Bacon, how Darwin, evolved their particular views and ideas. But if we go more deeply into the matter we find that both of them introduce into Christian civilisation an element which, to begin with, is altogether inexplicable as a product of that civilisation.

As we look back, the question arises: Had not Bacon and Darwin passed through earlier lives on earth? They carried over from those earlier incarnations the traits and characteristics revealed in their later lives. When we understand them as *individuals,* then and

only then do we understand their real place in history. For when the reality of karma is taken seriously, history resolves itself into deeds of men, into streams of human lives flowing from remote ages of the past into the present and thence into the future.

From now onwards these things will be spoken of without reserve; we shall speak of facts of the spiritual life in such a way that external history and the external world of nature will themselves reveal to us the spiritual realities lying behind.

It is certain that these questions, bearing as they do upon the spiritual and physical worlds alike, will, to begin with, be taken less seriously than is their due. For judgments about such matters cannot be formed as judgments are formed about the things of ordinary life. And in order to indicate the many underlying factors which have to be taken into consideration, I should like to make a certain personal reference — although it is meant to be quite objective — before we come to answer the questions: Who was Bacon in his previous life? Who was Darwin in his previous life? [Dr. Steiner did not speak further of Darwin in these lectures. Readers are referred to his lecture in Dornach, 16th March, 1924. *Karmic Relationships,* Vol. I.]

In the *Goetheanum Weekly*, as you know, I am writing the story of my life. But in a periodical intended for the outside world as well, it is not possible to speak of everything and certain additions must be made for the sake of those within our Movement who earnestly desire to find their way into the spiritual world. And so to-day, before I proceed in the next lectures to answer such questions as have here been raised, I should like to make this brief personal reference.

Those who like myself were born in the sixties of last century have lived through the epoch when the Gabriel Rulership of the preceding three and a half centuries was superseded by the Michael Rulership. The Michael Rulership, that is to say the entry of the Sun-Impulse belonging to Michael into the civilisation of humanity, began at the end of the seventies of last century. In the time immediately after the entry of the Michael influence, in the eighties and nineties, when the Michael Rulership was beginning to take effect behind the scenes of external happenings, those who were passing through the period of the development of the Intellectual or Mind Soul — that is to say between the ages of twenty-eight and thirty-five — were really living in a kind of aloofness from the physical world. For when a human being is consciously

active and alert in the Mind Soul he is aloof in a very real sense from the material world.

We speak of man as a being composed of physical body, etheric body, sentient body. With his physical body he stands clearly within the physical world. With his etheric body, sentient body and sentient soul too, he is strongly involved in the external world. But he can live aloof and apart from the external, material world when he is fully conscious in the Mind Soul, before the Consciousness or Spiritual Soul awakens in the thirty-fifth year of life. Full consciousness within the Mind Soul can transport a man altogether into the world of soul. And so in the eighties and nineties of last century there was opportunity for those possessed of the corresponding faculties to live in the Mind Soul, aloof to a greater or less extent from the physical world.

What does this mean? It means that in the Mind Soul, aloof from the material world, one was able to live in the very world into which Michael was entering on his way down towards the earth. The eighties and nineties produced many things that evoked wonder and admiration, there were many fields in which men became expert and many ways by which culture was enriched. Modern literature has words of high praise

for this period. Think only of what was achieved by newspapers and in the world of art from the years 1879, 1880–1890 onwards. But in these very years there were happenings of an altogether different character. — Behind a thin veil, a very thin veil at that time, was a world adjoining our physical world. Peculiar conditions prevailed shortly before the close of Kali Yuga at the end of the 19th century. In a neighbouring world, separated from the physical world by a veil so thin that it was impenetrable only to the everyday consciousness of men, things were taking place which must come to clearer and clearer evidence in the physical world and their influences brought to effect.

In very truth something mysterious was at work in the closing decades of the 19th century. There were momentous happenings, grouped around the Spirit we name Michael. Participating in these happenings were strong and forceful followers of Michael, human souls living at that time in their existence between death and rebirth, not yet incarnate in the physical body; but there were also mighty demonic Powers who under the sway of Ahrimanic influences set themselves in rebellion against what was thus to come into the world.

If I may now be allowed to make a personal reference, it is this: Conceptions of the reality of the spiritual world presented no difficulty to me at any age. What the spiritual world revealed penetrated into my soul, formed itself into ideas, into thoughts. On the other hand, things that came easily to others were difficult for me. I was always able quickly to grasp the arguments of natural scientific thinking, but concrete facts would not remain in my memory, simply would not register there. I could without effort understand the wave-theory, the arguments of the mathematicians, physicists and chemists; on the other hand, unlike most others, I could not recognise a particular mineral if I had seen it only once or twice; I was obliged to look at it perhaps thirty or forty times before I could recognise it again. I found it difficult to retain concrete pictures of the things of the external, material world. It was not easy for me to come fully into the physical world of sense.

For this reason I lived with all the forces of the Mind Soul through what was taking place in this world behind the veil, in this sphere of Michael’s activity. And it was there that the great challenge arose once and for all to deal earnestly with the reality of the spiritual world, to bring these momentous questions to the light of day. External life offered no incentive, for

all that was done there was to hash up once again the old, well-worn biographies of men like Darwin and Bacon. But there behind the scenes, behind this thin veil, in the region where Michael was at work, the great questions were brought to an issue. And this above all was borne in upon one: What a vast difference there is between asking these questions inwardly and putting them into actual words!

At the present time people think that once something is known it can immediately be spoken about. Indeed everything that enters people's ken to-day is at once put into words and announced. But when the questions at issue in Michael's sphere in the eighties and nineties took hold of a man, they worked on into the 20th century. And even after having lived with these questions for decades, every time one wanted to utter them, it was as though the opponents of Michael gathered round and sealed one's lips — for about certain matters silence was to be maintained.

Much that remained a Michael secret had therefore to be carried onward in the heart of the Anthroposophical Movement itself — above all the truths relating to historical connections of the kind to which reference has been made. But for a certain time now — actually for months — it has been possible for

me to speak of these things without reserve. That is why I have been able to speak freely of the connections between earthly lives, and shall also do so here. For this is part of the unveiling of those Michael Mysteries which took the course I have described to you.

This is one of the subjects which, up till now, has been dealt with in a more abstract way. At the beginning of the lecture I spoke of an eventuality, namely that the spiritual world might have withheld consent. It has not been so. What has actually happened is that since the Christmas Foundation Meeting and above all because of the opportunities vouchsafed to me for occult work, the demons who hitherto prevented these things from being voiced have been compelled to remain silent. The things to which I refer are not, of course, entirely *new,* for they were experienced a long time ago in the way I have indicated to you. But it must be remembered that in occultism things that are discovered one day cannot be communicated the next.

I have now spoken of a certain change in circumstances and am telling you these things in order that when, in the future, reference is made to concrete realities in the repeated earthly lives of

conspicuous or inconspicuous personalities, you may understand them with the necessary earnestness. Such things must not be lightly taken but with the respect that is their due.

In the forthcoming lectures such indications will be multiplied and elaborated. But before speaking about earlier incarnations of men like Darwin and others I wanted first to emphasise by what kind of spiritual atmosphere these things must be pervaded and the nature of the enlightenment that needs to be shed upon them.

Karmic Relationships, VIII: Lecture II

I have raised the question: How can we find in earlier earthly lives the explanation of a later incarnation, in the case not only of historical personages but also in that of many a personality unnoticed by history whose influence nevertheless arouses our interest? And to-day, as a foundation for further studies, I shall indicate connections in the incarnations of certain individuals. What I shall put before you is the outcome of a particular kind of spiritual investigation, and with this foundation — which will be given in narrative form to-day — we shall begin to understand how the successive earthly lives of individuals can be discovered.

We will take characteristic personalities whose names I gave as examples in the last lecture. Such personalities make us alive to the fact that spiritual impulses of very different kinds are working in our present civilisation. For well nigh two thousand years Christianity has been spreading in the West and in many colonial territories, influencing civilisation to a greater extent than is imagined. It is true, of course, that really close study may reveal the working of the Christ Impulse in many things where there is at first no

evidence of it. But for all that, it cannot be denied that there are elements in our civilisation which seem to have no connection whatever with Christianity. Certain views and customs of life which seem to be utterly at variance with Christianity take root in our civilisation.

The attention of one who calls super-sensible research to his aid in order to discover the deeper reasons for the course taken by the spiritual life of mankind, is drawn to a phenomenon insufficiently studied in connection with the growth of Western civilisation. His attention is drawn to the work of an institution which flourished in the East in the days of Charlemagne in the West. I am referring to that Court in the East whose ruler, surrounded by oriental splendour and magnificence, was Haroun al Raschid, the contemporary of Charlemagne whose achievements in the West fade into insignificance as compared with the brilliance of what was going forth, at the very same time, from the Court of Haroun al Raschid.

All branches of spiritual life had been brought together at this Court in Western Asia. It must be remembered that through the expeditions of Alexander, Greek culture had been carried over to Asia in a form of which only a faint inkling remains to-day.

The finest fruits of Greek culture had found their way to Asia, brought thither by the genius of Alexander the Great. And as a result, many centres of learning in the East had adopted conceptions of the world which faithfully preserved the old, while rejecting many elements that in the West were threatening to submerge the old.

Through the expeditions of Alexander the Great, a certain rational and healthy form of mysticism had been carried over to Asia, with the result that men who were more adapted for the kind of philosophical thinking thus introduced, regarded the world as pervaded by the Cosmic Intelligence. Over in Asia in those times a man did not say: “I think this or that out for myself, I have my own, personal intelligence” — but he said: “Everything that is thought is thought by Gods, primarily by the supreme Godhead — the Godhead as conceived by Aristotelianism.” The intelligence in a human being was a drop of the Universal Intelligence manifesting in the individual, so that in head and heart man felt himself to be an integral part of the Universal Intelligence.

Such was the mood-of-soul in those times and it prevailed, still, at the Court of Haroun al Raschid in the 8th and 9th centuries after the founding of

Christianity. Nor must it be forgotten that many learned sages had taken refuge in Asia when the Schools of Greek philosophy were exterminated in Europe. Astronomy with a strongly mystical trend, architecture and other forms of art revealing truly creative power, poetry, sciences, directives for practical life — all these things flourished at the Court of Haroun al Raschid. He was a splendour-loving but at the same time a highly gifted organiser and he gathered at his Court the most learned men of his day, men who although they were no longer working as Initiates, still preserved and cultivated in a living way much of the ancient wisdom of the Mysteries.

We will consider more closely one such personality. He was a very wise Counsellor of Haroun al Raschid. His name is of no consequence and has not come down to posterity, but he was a man of great wisdom and in order to understand him we must pay attention to something that may surprise even those who are to some extent conversant with Spiritual Science.

There is a question which may occur to all of you. You may say: Anthroposophy tells us that there were once Initiates, living here or there, possessing far-reaching knowledge and profound wisdom. But since men live again in new earthly lives, why is it that to-

day, for example, we do not recognise reincarnated sages of old? This would be an entirely reasonable question.

But one who is aware of the conditions by which earthly life is determined, knows that an individuality whose karma leads him from pre-earthly existence to birth in a particular epoch, must accept the educational facilities which that epoch affords. And so it may well be that although some individual was an Initiate in bygone times, the knowledge he possessed as an Initiate remains in the subconscious realm of the soul; his day-consciousness gives indications of powers of some significance but does not directly reveal what was once in his soul in an earlier incarnation as an Initiate.

This is true of that wise Counsellor of Haroun al Raschid. In very ancient Mysteries he had been an Initiate. He had reincarnated and he lived as a reincarnated Initiate at the Court of Haroun al Raschid; the fruits of his earlier Initiation revealed themselves in a genius for organisation and he was able to administer in a truly masterly way the work of the other learned men at that Court. But he did not make the direct impression of an Initiate. Through his own being and qualities, not merely through the fact of

earlier Initiation, he preserved the ancient Initiation-Science — but as I said, he did not actually give the impression of having attained Initiation.

Haroun al Raschid held this wise man in high esteem, entrusting him with the organisation of all the sciences and arts flourishing at the Court. Haroun al Raschid was happy to have this man at his side, feeling tied to him by a deep and sincere friendship.

We will now turn our attention to these two individuals, Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor — remembering that in the 8th and 9th centuries at the Court of Charlemagne in Europe, men of the highest social rank (including Charlemagne himself) were only just beginning to make their first attempts at writing; at the same Court, Eginhart was endeavouring to formulate the early rudiments of grammar. In days when everything in Europe was extremely primitive, over in Asia much brilliant spiritual culture was personified in Haroun al Raschid whom Charlemagne held in great veneration. But this was a kind of culture which knew nothing of Christ nor wished to have anything to do with Christianity; it preserved and cultivated the best elements of Arabism and also kept alive ancient forms of Aristotelian thought — those forms which had not made their way

to Europe, for it was chiefly Aristotelian logic and dialectic which had spread so widely in the West and were the principles upon which the work of the Church Fathers and later on that of the Schoolmen was based.

As a result of the achievements of Alexander the Great, it was the more mystical and scientific knowledge imparted by Aristotle that had been cultivated in Asia where it had all come under the influence of the tremendously powerful intelligence of Arabism — which was, however, held to be a revealed, an inspired intelligence.

The existence of Christianity was known to the learned men at the Court of Haroun al Raschid but they regarded it as primitive and elementary in comparison with their own intellectual achievements.

We will now follow the subsequent destinies of these two personalities; Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor. Having worked in the way I have described, they bore with them through the gate of death the impulse to ensure that the kind of thinking, the world-conception cultivated at this Court, should spread in the world.

Let us consider soberly and in all earnestness, what then ensued. Two individualities start out from Asia:

the wise Counsellor and his overlord, Haroun al Raschid. For a time after death they remained together. It was to Alexandrianism, to Aristotelianism, that they owed the knowledge they had acquired. But they also absorbed all that in later times had been done to re-cast, to re-model these teachings. Unless it is possible to grasp what is happening in the spiritual world while the events of the physical world take their course on the earth below, we can understand only a tiny fraction of the world.

History gives a picture of what transpired after the epoch of Charlemagne and Haroun al Raschid. But while all that history relates about Asia and Europe was proceeding in the 8th and 9th centuries and on into the late Middle Ages, other most significant happenings were taking place in the spiritual world above. It must not be forgotten that while the physical life below and the spiritual life above flow on, influences from souls passing through their existence between death and rebirth stream down perpetually upon earthly life. Therefore we do right to attach importance to what the discarnate souls yonder in the spiritual world are experiencing and how they are acting in any particular epoch. Human life, above all in its course through history, can never be really comprehensible unless we turn our attention to what

is happening behind the scenes of external history, in the spiritual world.

Now it must be remembered that the impressions which men carry with them through the gate of death often differ in a very marked degree from the impressions people have of them during earthly life. And those who cannot throw off preconceptions when they are observing the spiritual life may find it difficult to recognise some particular individuality who in his existence after death is revealed to the eye of the seer. Nevertheless there are means whereby one can learn to perceive phases of spiritual life other than the one immediately following earthly existence. I have spoken of this in the Lecture-Course that is being given here [*True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation*. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1969.] and I shall have still more to say about the later phases of the life stretching from death to a new birth. We shall then understand more clearly the nature of the paths which enable us to make contact with the so-called Dead.

It is by these same paths that we are able to follow the further destinies of individuals such as Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor. In order to understand later developments in European civilisation it is of the greatest importance to take

account of these two individuals, above all of the bond between them in their thought and principles of action. Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor also bore with them through the gate of death a deep and strong affinity with the individualities of Alexander and Aristotle — who had, of course, preceded them in earthly existence by many centuries — and an intense longing to come into direct contact with them again. Moreover a meeting actually took place, with consequences of far-reaching significance.

For a while, Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor journeyed onwards together in the super-sensible world, looking down from thence upon happenings in the civilised world further to the West, in Greece, in certain regions North of the Black Sea, and so forth. They looked down upon it all and among the events upon which their gaze fell was one of which much has been said in anthroposophical lectures, namely the 8th General Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in the year 869 A.D.

The effect of this 8th Ecumenical Council upon the development of Western civilisation was incisive and profound, for Trichotomy, the definition of man as body, soul and Spirit, was then declared heretical. It was decreed that true Christians must speak of man as

a twofold being, consisting of body and soul only, the soul possessing certain spiritual qualities and forces. The reason why so little inclination to spirituality is to be discerned in Christian civilisation is that acknowledgment of the Spirit was declared heretical by the 8th Ecumenical Council in the year 869.

It was a momentous event, the effects of which have been far too little heeded. The Spirit was done away with: man was to be regarded as consisting only of body and soul. But the shattering experience for one who can observe the spiritual life and above all for one who truly participates in it is that precisely when here on earth in the year 869 A.D. the Spirit was done away with, there took place in the spiritual world above the meeting between the souls of Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor and the souls of Alexander the Great and Aristotle.

In thinking about what follows, you must accustom yourselves to the fact that super-sensible happenings will now be spoken of in Anthroposophy as naturally as we speak of happenings in the physical world. The lives of Alexander the Great and of Aristotle in those particular incarnations marked the culmination of a certain epoch. The impulse which had been given by ancient cultures and had come to expression in

Greece was formulated by Aristotle into concepts which in the form of ideas dominated the West and human civilisation in general for long ages of time.

Alexander the Great, the pupil and friend of Aristotle, had with stupendous forcefulness spread the impulses given by Aristotle over wide areas of the then known world. This impulse was still working in Asia in the days of Haroun al Raschid. It had long possessed a centre of brilliant and illustrious learning in Alexandria but at the same time, working through many hidden channels, it had a profound effect upon the whole of oriental culture.

All this had reached a certain culmination. The impulses of ancient spirituality in their manifold forms had converged in Alexandrianism and Aristotelianism. Christianity was born. The Mystery of Golgotha took place — in an age when the individualities of Alexander and Aristotle were not incarnated on the earth but were in the spiritual world, in intimate communion with what we call the dominion of Michael whose earthly rule had also come to its close, for Oriphiel had then succeeded Michael as the ruling Time-Spirit. Centuries had passed since the Mystery of Golgotha. What Alexander and Aristotle had established on earth, the aims to which they had

dedicated all their powers, the one in the field of thought, the other giving effect to a great genius for rulership — all this had been at work on the earth below. And from the spiritual world these two souls beheld it flowing on through the centuries, during one of which the Mystery of Golgotha had taken place. They turned their gaze upon all that was being done to spread a knowledge of the Mystery of Golgotha. They saw their work spreading abroad on the earth beneath, spreading too through the activities of individuals like Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor.

But in the souls of Alexander and Aristotle themselves there was an urge for something completely new, for a new beginning — not a mere continuation of what was already on the earth, but veritably a new beginning. In a certain respect, of course, there would be continuation, for it was not a question of sweeping away the old. But a new and mighty impulse whereby a particular form of Christianity would be instilled into earthly civilisation — it was to the inauguration of this impulse that Alexander and Aristotle dedicated themselves.

When their karma led them down again to incarnation on the earth (— it was before the meeting had taken place with Haroun al Raschid and his

Counsellor —) they lived, unknown and unheeded, in a corner of Europe not without importance for Anthroposophy, dying at an early age, but gazing for a brief moment as it were through a window into the civilisation of the West, receiving impressions and impulses but giving none of any significance themselves. That was to come later.

They had returned again into the spiritual world and were in the spiritual world when in the year 869 the 8th Ecumenical Council was held at Constantinople. It was then that the meeting took place in the spiritual world between Aristotle and Alexander on the one side and Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor on the other. It was an exchange of thought and ideas in the super-sensible world, of immense, far-reaching significance. We must realise that exchanges or conferences of this nature in the super-sensible world are of infinitely greater moment than mere discussions in words. When people on the earth sit together in discussion, when words shoot hither and thither without having much effect one way or the other, this is not even a shadowy image of what transpires when great decisions affecting the spiritual life as well, are taken in super-sensible worlds.

Alexander and Aristotle affirmed at that time that what had been established in earlier days must now be guided undeviatingly into the dominion of Michael. For it was known that Michael would again assume his Regency in the 19th century.

At this point we must understand one another. As the evolution of mankind flows onwards, one of the Archangels becomes Regent and exercises earthly rule for a period of three to three-and-a-half centuries. At the time when Aristotelianism was carried by Alexander the Great to Asia and Africa, at the time when the spread of this culture was pervaded by a cosmopolitan, international spirit, Michael was the Ruling Archangel; the spiritual life was under his dominion. The Regency of Michael was followed by that of Oriphiel. Then, until the 14th century A.D., there follow the Rulerships of Anael, Zachariel, Raphael, Samael — each lasting for three to four centuries. Gabriel is Regent from the 15th until the last third of the 19th century, when Michael again assumes dominion. Seven Archangels follow one another. Thus the earthly Rulerships of six other Archangels follow that of Michael, which was in force at the time of Alexander, and Michael assumes dominion again at the end of the 19th century. We ourselves, do we but rightly understand the spiritual

life, live under the direct influence of the Michael Rulership.

And so in the century when the meeting with Haroun al Raschid took place, Alexander and Aristotle turned their gaze to the earlier Rulership of Michael under which their work had been carried forward, they turned their gaze to the Mystery of Golgotha which as members of the Michael-community they had experienced from the sphere of the Sun, not from the earth — for at that time Michael's rule on earth was over. Michael and his own, among them Alexander and Aristotle, did not experience the Mystery of Golgotha from the vantage-point of the earth; they did not witness the arrival of Christ on the earth, they witnessed His departure from the Sun. But all that they experienced formed itself into the impulse which remained alive in them — the impulse to ensure that the new Michael Rulership, to which with every fibre of their souls Alexander and Aristotle had pledged their troth, would bring a Christianity not only firmly established but more inward, more profound. The new dominion of Michael was to begin in the year 1879 and last for three to four centuries. This is our own epoch and it behoves Anthroposophists to understand what it means to be living under the Michael Rulership.

Neither Haroun al Raschid nor his Counsellor were willing to accept this — the Counsellor with less emphasis, but fundamentally it was so in his case too. They desired, first and foremost, that the world should be dominated by the impulse that had taken such firm root in Mohammedanism. The participants in this spiritual struggle in the 9th century A.D. confronted each other in resolute, intense opposition — Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor on the one side and, on the other, the individualities who had lived as Aristotle and Alexander.

The aftermaths of this spiritual struggle worked on in the civilisation of Europe, are indeed working to this day. For what happens in the spiritual world above works down upon and into the affairs of the earth. And the very opposition with which Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor confronted Aristotle and Alexander at that time added strength to the impulse, so that from this meeting two streams went forth — one taking its course in Arabism and one whereby, through the impulses of the Michael Rulership, Aristotelianism was to be led over into Christianity.

After this encounter in the super-sensible world, Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor continued along a path leading towards the West, watching and

observing what was happening below on the earth. From this super-sensible existence, the one (he who had lived as Haroun al Raschid) concerned himself deeply with civilisation in Northern Africa, in Southern. Europe, in Spain, in France. During approximately the same period, the other (he who had been the wise Counsellor) concerned himself with the happenings of the spiritual life more towards the East, in the neighbourhood of the Black Sea, and thence through Europe as far as Holland and even England. And at roughly the same time, both were born again in European civilisation.

Now there need not necessarily be external similarity between such reincarnations. It is as a rule quite erroneous to believe that a man who has in him a particular kind of spirituality will be born again with that same spirituality. We must look more deeply into the roots of the human soul if we are to speak truly about repeated earthly lives. So, for example, we may take the famous Pope Gregory VII, the former Abbot Hildebrand — a Pope who worked fervidly for the cause of Catholicism and to whom is due much of the power wielded by the Papacy in the Middle Ages. He was born again in the 19th century as Ernst Haeckel, a bitter opponent of the Papacy. Haeckel is the reborn Abbot Hildebrand, Gregory VII, Gregory the Great. In

giving this example my only object is to show that it is the inner, deep-rooted impulses of the soul and not external similarity of thought and outlook that are carried over from one earthly life into another.

And so while the Arabians were still surging across Africa into Spain, it was the natural tendency of Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor to watch and exercise a protective influence over these campaigns. Outwardly, of course, the spread of Mohammedanism was checked, but its inner characteristics and trends were carried through the spiritual life by both these individualities on their journey between death and rebirth — carried over from the past into the future.

Haroun al Raschid was born again as Bacon of Verulam. His wise Counsellor too was born again, almost at the same time, as Amos Comenius, the educational reformer.

Think of what was brought into the world through Bacon of Verulam who was only outwardly a Christian and who introduced the abstract trend of Arabism into European science; and then think of what Amos Comenius instilled into education — his advocacy of material, concrete realism, his principles of the form in which all teaching matter should be imparted. It is a

trend that has no direct connection with Christianity. Although Amos Comenius worked among the Moravian Brothers, what he actually brought into being is to be explained by the fact that in a previous incarnation he stood in the same relationship to the development of the spiritual life of mankind as did the culture flourishing at the Court of Haroun al Raschid.

Think of every line of Bacon's writings, of what lies inherent in the sense-realism, as it is called, of Amos Comenius — it is all a riddle, perplexing, inexplicable. Lord Bacon is a violent opponent of Aristotelianism. His passionate antagonism is so clearly in evidence that one can perceive how deeply this impulse is rooted in his soul. The spiritual investigator who is able to discern and penetrate these things, not only studies Bacon of Verulam and Amos Comenius but also follows their life in the super-sensible world between death and rebirth. In the writings of Bacon of Verulam and Amos Comenius, in the very tone of their writings, in everything about them there is evidence of rebellion against Aristotelianism. How is this to be explained?

The following must be remembered. When Bacon and Amos Comenius returned to earthly life, Alexander and Aristotle had already again been in incarnation

during the Middle Ages, at a time when they, for their part, had accomplished- what it was then possible to accomplish for Aristotelianism, moreover when Aristotelianism itself was present in a form very different from that in which it had been cultivated by Haroun al Raschid — who, as I said, is the same individuality as Bacon of Verulam.

Picture to yourselves the whole situation. Think of the meeting — if I may express it so — in the year 869 A.D. and of how under this influence there had taken shape in Haroun al Raschid impulses of soul which now encountered something that had already been partially accomplished on the earth — for Alexander and Aristotle had already been in incarnation and their lives as men on earth in the pre-Christian era had played no part in giving effect to their aim. Realising this, you will understand the nature of the impulses resulting from that meeting in the spiritual world. And from the fact that Bacon and Amos Comenius could now perceive what Alexandrianism and Aristotelianism had become in the world, you will be able to understand the tone pervading their writings — the writings of Bacon especially, but also those of Amos Comenius.

Studied in the true and real way, history, as you see, leads us from the earth to the heavens. Account must be taken of happenings that can only be revealed in the super-sensible world. To understand Bacon of Verulam and Amos Comenius we must follow them backwards, first through the epoch when Aristotelianism was being promulgated by Scholasticism, backwards again to the encounter in the year 869 at the time of the 8th Ecumenical Council and then still further back, to the epoch when Alexandrianism and Aristotelianism were being promoted and cultivated by Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor in the form that was possible in those days. The happenings of life on the earth can only be really comprehensible when account is taken of how the super-sensible world works into the physical world.

This much I wanted to say, in order to show you that the work and influence of certain personalities on earth can only be understood by following and observing their several incarnations.

There is no time to say more about these things to-day and I will therefore bring the lecture to a brief conclusion.

As we study the progress of human civilisation it becomes apparent that through such individualities as Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor who was subsequently reborn as Amos Comenius, there creeps into the development of Christianity an element that will not merge with Christianity but inclines strongly towards Arabism. Thus in our own time we have on the one side the direct, unbroken line of Christian development and on the other, the penetration of Arabism, first and foremost in abstract science.

What I want particularly to lay on your hearts is the following: Spiritual contemplation of these two streams leads our gaze to many things which have taken place in the super-sensible world, for example to an event like that of the meeting between Alexander, Aristotle, Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor. Impulses kindled by many such events furthered the spread of true Christianity, while other events were the causes of hindrances along its path. But because in the spiritual world the Michael Impulse has taken the course I have indicated to you, there is good hope that in time to come Christianity will receive its real and true form under the sign of the Michael Impulse. For under the sign of the Michael Impulse other exchanges of thought have also taken place in the super-sensible world.

Let me add only this. Many personalities have come together in the Anthroposophical Society. They too have their karma which leads back to earlier times and appears in many different forms as we go backwards to the pre-earthly existence and then to earlier incarnations. Among those who come to the Anthroposophical Movement with real sincerity, there are only a few who were not led by their karma to participate in such happenings as I have now been describing to you. In one way or another, those who with deep sincerity feel the urge to enter the Anthroposophical Society are connected with events like the meeting of Alexander and Aristotle with Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor. Something of the kind has determined the karma which then, in the present earthly life, takes the form of a longing to receive the spiritual knowledge that is cultivated in the Anthroposophical Movement.

But something else must here be added. Because of the particular form which the Michael Rulership assumes, there will be many deviations from the laws determining reincarnation in the case of those persons whose karma and connection with the Michael dominion leads them into the Anthroposophical Movement. For they will appear again at the turn of the 20th/21st century — therefore in less than a

hundred years — in order to carry to full and culminating effect what as Anthroposophists they are able to do now in the service of Michael’s dominion. The urge to be a true Anthroposophist expresses itself in the interest taken in matters of the kind of which we have been speaking — provided the interest is deep and sincere. The very understanding of these things gives rise to the impulse to return to the earth in less than a century in order to give effect to the intent and purpose of Anthroposophy.

I should like you to think deeply about the indications that have been given. In these brief words much may be found that will help you to find your true place in the Anthroposophical Movement and to feel that your membership of this Movement is deeply connected with your karma.

Karmic Relationships, VIII: Lecture III

During the hour that has become available today I want to speak about certain things which will be easier to understand now that preparation has been made both in the general lecture-course and in the last two lectures to Members. I shall speak this evening about the karma of the Anthroposophical Society and continue this same theme in London during the next few days.

The lectures here have made it clear that in our own epoch the Impulse of the Being known in Christian terminology as the Archangel Michael is responsible for the spiritual guidance of civilised mankind. This particular Rulership — if so it may be called — of the spiritual life began in the seventies of last century and was preceded, as I said, by that of Gabriel. I shall now have something to say about certain aspects of the present Rulership of Michael.

Whenever Michael sends his impulses through the evolution of humanity in the sphere of earthly life, he is the bringer of the Sun-forces, the spiritual forces of the Sun. With this is connected the fact that during

their waking consciousness men receive these Sun-forces into their physical and etheric bodies.

The present Rulership of Michael — which began not very long ago and will last from three to four centuries — signifies that the cosmic forces of the Sun penetrate right into the physical and etheric bodies of men. And here we must ask: What kind of forces, what kind of impulses are these cosmic Sun-forces?

Michael is essentially a Sun-Spirit. He is therefore the Spirit whose task in our epoch is to bring about a deeper, more esoteric understanding of the truths of Christianity. Christ came from the Sun. Christ, the Sun-Being, dwelt on the earth in the body of Jesus and has lived since then in super-sensible communion with the world of men. But before the whole Mystery connected with Christ can reveal itself to the soul, mankind must become sufficiently mature and the necessary deepening will to a great extent have to be achieved during the present Age of Michael.

Now whenever the Sun-forces work in upon the earth they are always connected with an impulse which streams into earthly civilisation as an inpouring wave of intellectuality, for in our sphere of existence everything possessed by man and by the world in

general in the way of intellectuality, intelligence, derives from the Sun. The Sun is the source of all intellectual life operating in the service of the Spirit.

Utterance of this truth may evoke a certain inner resistance today, for men do right not to place too high a value upon intellect in its present form. Those who have any real understanding of the spiritual life will not set much store by the intellectuality prevailing in the modern age. It is abstract and formal, it crowds the human mind with ideas and concepts which are utterly remote from living reality, it is cold, dry and barren as compared with the warm, radiant life pulsing alike through the world and through man.

In respect of intelligence, however, this holds good only for the present time, since we are living in a very early period of the Michael Age and what we now possess as intelligence is still only just beginning to unfold in the general consciousness of mankind. In time to come this intelligence will have an altogether different character. In order to realise how the nature of intelligence changes during the course of human evolution, let us recall that in medieval Christian philosophy Thomas Aquinas still speaks of Beings, of “Intelligences” inhabiting the stars. As opposed to the

materialistic views prevailing today, we ourselves regard the stars as colonies of spiritual Beings

This seems strange and far-fetched to the ears of a modern man who has not the remotest inkling that when he gazes at the stars he is gazing at Beings related in certain respects with his own life and inhabiting the stars just as we ourselves inhabit the earth.

In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas speaks of Beings in the stars although he assigns to each star a single Being in the sense that earthly humanity would be regarded as a single unit if the earth were being observed from some distant heavenly body. We ourselves know that the stars are to be conceived as colonies of Beings in the cosmos. Thomas Aquinas does not speak of specific Beings or numbers of Beings inhabiting the stars, but when he refers to the “Intelligences” of the stars this authority of medieval Christian doctrine is continuing a tradition which at that time was already dying away. This is an indication that what is comprised to-day in the term “Intelligence” was once something altogether different.

In very ancient times a man did not produce his thoughts from out of himself; when he thought about the things of the world his thoughts were not the product of his own inner activity. The faculty of thinking, man’s own activity in the forming of thoughts, has only fully unfolded since the 15th century, since the entry of the Consciousness or Spiritual Soul into the evolution of humanity. In olden, pre-Christian times it would never have occurred to men to believe that they were producing their own thoughts out of themselves; they did not feel that they themselves were forming their thoughts but rather that the thoughts were revealed to them from the things of the world. They felt: Intelligence is universal, cosmic; Intelligence is contained within the things of the world; the Intelligence-content, the Thought-content of things is perceived just as colours are perceived; the world is full of Intelligence, pervaded everywhere by Intelligence. In the course of his evolution man has acquired a drop of the Intelligence that is spread over the wide universe. Such was the conception in days of old.



And so man was conscious all the time that his thoughts were revealed to him, inspired into him. He ascribed Intelligence only to the universe, not to himself.

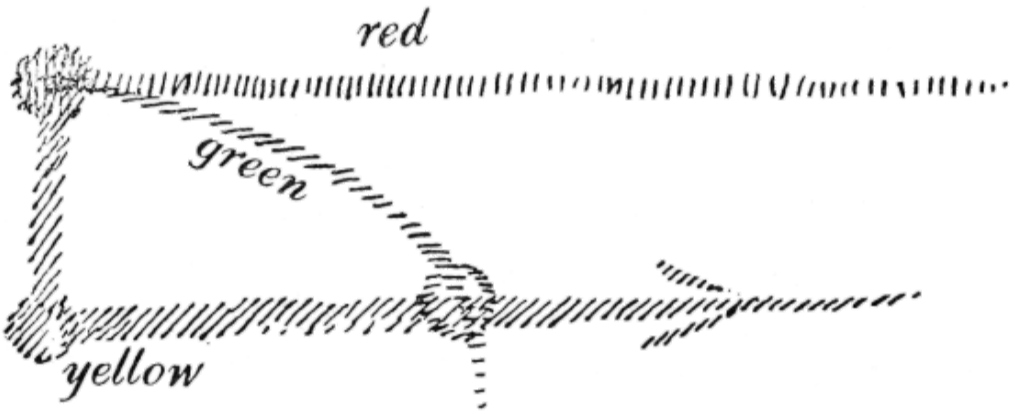
Now throughout the ages, the Regent of this Cosmic Intelligence which, like the light, streams over the whole world, has been the Spirit known by the name of *Michael*. Michael is the Ruler of the Cosmic Intelligence. But after the Mystery of Golgotha something of deep significance took place in that Michael’s dominion over the Cosmic Intelligence gradually fell away from him, fell from his grasp. Since the earth began, Michael has administered the Cosmic Intelligence. And in the age of Alexander, of Aristotle,

when a man was aware of thoughts, that is to say of the content of Intelligence within him, he did not regard these thoughts as his own, self-made thoughts; he felt that the thoughts were revealed to him through the Michael-Power, although in that pagan epoch this Being was known by a different name. This Thought-content gradually fell away from Michael. And if we look into the spiritual world we see that the descent of the Intelligence from the Sun to the earth is accomplished by about the 8th century A.D. In the 9th century men are already beginning, as the forerunners of those who came later, to unfold their own, personal intelligence; intelligence begins to take footing within the souls of individual men. And looking down from the Sun to the earth, Michael and his hosts could say: What we have administered through aeons of time has fallen away from us, has streamed downwards and is now to be found within the souls of men on earth.

Such was the mood and feeling prevailing in the Michael-community on the Sun. It was in the age of Alexander and for a few centuries previously that Michael had exercised his former earthly dominion. But at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, Michael and his own were in the sphere of the Sun and from there they witnessed the departure of Christ from the Sun; they did not, as those who were below, witness

His arrival among them on earth. Michael and his hosts witnessed the departure of Christ from the Sun and at the same time they saw that their dominion over the Intelligence was gradually falling from their grasp.

Thus in the periods of evolution after the Mystery of Golgotha, the course of development is as follows. Here we have the stream of spiritual, heavenly life (red) and here the stream of earthly life (yellow). Christ comes to the earth and lives henceforward in union with the earth. Until the 8th or 9th century the Intelligence is gradually sinking down to the earth (green). Men begin to ascribe what they call knowledge, what they unfold in thoughts, to their



own, personal intelligence. Michael sees that what he has administered through aeons is now to be found within the souls of men on earth. And in the Michael-

community it was realised: During our next rulership (— it was to begin in the last third of the 19th century —) when our impulses are again to pour through earthly civilisation, it is on the earth that we shall have to seek for the Intelligence which has descended from the heavens in order that in the hearts and in the souls of men it may be possible for us again to administer what through aeons we have administered from the Sun, from the cosmos.

And so at this time the Michael-community prepared itself to find again in the hearts of men that which had fallen from its grasp that which under the influence of the Mystery of Golgotha had also been taking the path, albeit a more gradual path, from the heavens to the earth. I will now indicate briefly how Michael and his hosts have striven in order that from this present Michael Age onwards they may once again take hold of the Intelligence that fell away from them in the heavens. Michael who has been striving from the Sun for those on earth who perceive the Spiritual in the cosmos, desires henceforward to establish his citadel in the hearts and in the souls of men on earth. This is to begin in our present age. Christianity is to be guided into a realm of deeper truths inasmuch as understanding of Christ as a Sun Being is to arise within humanity through Michael, the Sun Spirit who

has always ruled over the Intelligence, who can now no longer administer it in the cosmos but desires in future time to administer it in and through the hearts of men.

In seeking to discover the origin and source of Intelligence m whatever form it may be revealed, men turn today to the human head, because having descended from the heavens to the earth, the Intelligence weaves within the soul and is made manifest inwardly through the head. It was not always so in times when men strove for Intelligence for the essence of the Intelligence revealing itself from the Cosmos In those earlier epochs men strove for Intelligence *not* by developing the faculties of the head but by seeking for the Inspirations conveyed to them by the cosmic forces

An example of how in olden time men sought the Cosmic Intelligence in a way in which it is no longer sought today is to be found when one stands, as we were able to do last Sunday, at that place in Tintagel which was once the site of King Arthur’s Castle and where he with his twelve companions exercised a power of far-reaching significance for Europe.

From the accounts contained in historical documents it will not be easy to form a true conception of the tasks and the mission of King Arthur and his Round Table as it is called. But this becomes possible when one stands on the actual site of the castle and gazes with the eye of spirit over the stretch of sea which an intervening cliff seems to divide into two. There, in a comparatively short time, one can perceive a wonderful interplay between the light and the air, but also between the elemental spirits living in light and air. One can see spirit-beings streaming to the earth in the rays of the Sun, one can see them mirrored in the glittering raindrops, one can see that which comes under the sway of earthly gravity appearing in the air as the denser spirit-beings of the air. Again, when the rain ceases and the rays of the Sun stream through the clear air, one perceives the elemental spirits intermingling in quite a different way. There one witnesses how the Sun works in earthly substance — and seeing it all from a place such as this, one is filled with a kind of pagan “piety” — not Christian but pagan piety, which is something altogether different. Pagan piety is a surrender of heart and feeling to the manifold spiritual beings working in the processes of nature.

Amid the conditions of modern social life it is not, generally speaking, possible for men to give effect to the processes coming to expression in the play of nature-forces. These things can be penetrated only by Initiation-knowledge. But you must understand that every spiritual attainment is dependent upon some essential and fundamental condition.

In the example I gave this morning [Lecture X. *True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation*.] to illustrate how the knowledge of material phenomena must be furthered and extended, I spoke of the interweaving, self-harmonising karma of two human beings as a necessary factor. And in the days of King Arthur and those around him, special conditions were required in order that the spirituality so wondrously revealed and borne in by the sea might flow into their mission and their tasks.

This interplay between the sunlit air and the rippling, foam-crested waves continues to this day; over the sea and the rocky cliffs at this place, nature is still quick with spirit. But to take hold of the spirit-forces working there in nature would have been beyond the power of *one* individual alone. A group of men was necessary, one of whom felt himself as the representative of the Sun at the centre, and whose

twelve companions were trained in such a way that in temperament, disposition and manner of acting, all of them together formed a twelve-fold whole — twelve individual men grouped as the Zodiacal constellations are grouped around the Sun. Such was the Round Table: King Arthur at the centre, surrounded by the Twelve, above each of whom a Zodiacal symbol was displayed, indicating the particular cosmic influence with which he was associated. Civilising forces went out from this place to Europe. It was here that King Arthur and his Twelve Knights drew into themselves from the Sun the strength wherewith to set forth on their mighty expeditions through Europe in order to battle with the wild, demonic powers of old still dominating large masses of the population, and drive them out of men. Under the guidance and direction of King Arthur, these Twelve were battling for outer civilisation.

To understand what the Twelve felt about themselves and their mission, it must be remembered that in olden time men did not claim a personal intelligence of their own. They did not say: I form my thoughts, my Intelligence-filled thoughts, myself. They experienced Intelligence as *revealed* Intelligence, and they sought for the revelations by forming themselves into a group like the one I have described, a group of

twelve or thirteen. There they imbibed the Intelligence which enabled them to give direction and definition to the impulses needed for civilisation. And they too felt that their deeds were performed in the service of the Power known in Christian-Hebraic terminology as Michael. The whole configuration of this castle at Tintagel indicates that the Twelve under the direction of King Arthur were essentially a Michael-community, belonging to the age when Michael still administered the Cosmic Intelligence.

This was actually the community which worked longer than any other to ensure that Michael should retain his dominion over the Cosmic Intelligence. At the ruins of King Arthur's Castle today, the Akasha Chronicle still preserves the picture of the stones falling from those once mighty gates, and these falling stones become an image of the Cosmic Intelligence falling, sinking away from the hands of Michael into the minds and hearts of men.

At another place this Arthur-Michael stream has its polaric contrast: the Grail stream of which the Parsifal Legend tells. [See Rudolf Steiner, *Christ and the Spiritual World*, Leipzig, 28th December, 1913–2nd January, 1914. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1963.] This other stream comes into being at a place where a more

inward form of Christianity had taken refuge. In the Grail stream too we have the Twelve around the One but account is everywhere taken of the fact that the Intelligence, the Intelligence-filled thoughts, no longer flow as Revelations from the heavens to the earth; what has now streamed downward seems, in face of earthly thoughts, to be like the “pure fool” — Parsifal. It is realised here that the Intelligence must now be sought within the earthly sphere alone.

There in the North stands King Arthur’s castle where men still turn to the Cosmic Intelligence and where they strive to instil the Intelligence belonging to the universe into civilisation on earth. And further to the South stands that other castle, the Grail castle, where the Intelligence is no longer drawn from the heavens but where it is realised that what is wisdom before men is foolishness before God and what is wisdom before God is foolishness before men. The impulse proceeding from this other castle in the South strives to penetrate the Intelligence that is now no longer the *Cosmic* Intelligence.

And so in olden times, lasting on into the age when the Mystery of Golgotha takes place over in Asia, we find in the Arthur stream the intense striving to ensure Michael’s dominion over the Intelligence, and in the

Grail stream going out from Spain, the striving in which account is taken of the fact that the Intelligence must in future be found on earth, since it no longer flows down from the heavens. The import of what I have just described to you breathes through the whole legend of the Grail.

Study of these two streams brings to light the great problem arising from the historical situation at that time. Men are confronted with the after-workings of the Arthur-principle and the after-workings of the Grail principle. The problem is: How does Michael himself, not a human being like Parsifal, but Michael himself, find the path leading from his Arthurian knights who strive to ensure his cosmic sovereignty, to his Grail knights who strive to prepare the way for him into the hearts and minds of men in order that therein he may again take hold of the Intelligence? And now the great problem of our own age takes definition: How shall the Michael Rulership bring about a deeper understanding of Christianity? Overwhelmingly this problem confronts us, marked by the contrast of the two castles: the one of which the ruins are to be seen to this day at Tintagel, and that other castle which will not easily be seen by human eyes, since in the spiritual realm it is surrounded, as it were, by a trackless forest, sixty leagues deep on every hand.

Between these two castles looms the great question: How can Michael become the giver of the impulse which will lead to a deeper understanding of the truths of Christianity?

Now it would not be correct to say that the Knights of King Arthur were not battling for Christ and the real Christ Impulse. It was simply that they bore within them the urge to seek for Christ *in the Sun* and they would not abandon their conviction that the Sun is the fount of Christianity.

Hence their feeling that they were bringing the heavens down to the earth, that their Michael-battles were being waged for Christ Who works from the rays of the Sun. Within the Grail stream the Christ Impulse takes expression in a different way. Men are conscious that the Christ Impulse, having come down to the earth, must hence-forward be carried into effect through the hearts of men. The spiritual Essence of the Sun is now united with earthly evolution — such was their conviction.

I have told you in these lectures [See Lecture 4. *True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation*.] of individuals who in the 12th century taught and worked in the School of Chartres, where teachings still

inspired by a lofty and sublime spirituality were given forth. I spoke of particular Teachers in the School of Chartres, among them Bernardus Sylvestris, Bernard of Chartres, Alanus ab Insulis — and there were others too, surrounded by a great company of pupils. Remembering what was especially characteristic of these Teachers of Chartres, we may say: In some measure they still preserved within them the old traditions of nature teeming with life and being as opposed to an abstract, material nature. And this was why there still hovered over the School of Chartres elements of that Sun-Christianity which the heroes of Arthur's Round Table, as Knights of Michael, had striven to implant as an impulse in the world.

In a remarkable way this School of Chartres stands midway between the Arthur-principle in the North and the Grail-principle in the South. And like shadows cast by the castle of King Arthur and the castle of the Grail, the super-sensible, invisible impulses made their way, not so much into the actual content of the teachings, as into the whole attitude and mood-of-soul of the pupils who gathered with glowing enthusiasm in the "lecture halls" — as we should say nowadays — of Chartres. These were times when in the Christianity presented by these Teachers of Chartres, Christ was conceived as the sublime Sun-Spirit Who had

appeared in Jesus of Nazareth. So that when these men spoke of the Christ they saw His Impulse working on in earthly evolution in the sense of the Grail-conception, and at the same time they saw in Him the down-pouring Impulse of the Sun.

What is revealed to spiritual observation as the essence, the keynote of the teachings given forth at Chartres cannot be discovered today from surviving literary texts emanating from individual Teachers in the School of Chartres. To the modern student these writings seem scarcely more than glossaries of names. But in the brief sentences interspersed between the countless designations, names, definitions, those who read with spiritual penetration will discern the deep spirituality, the profound insight still possessed by these Teachers of Chartres.

Towards the end of the 12th century they passed through the gate of death into the spiritual world. And there they came together with that other stream which was also linked with the Michael Age of ancient time but in which full account was taken of the central truth of Christianity, namely that the Christ Impulse had come down from the heavens to the earth. In the spiritual world the Teachers of Chartres came into contact with all that the Aristotelians of old had been

able, as a result of the expeditions of Alexander to Asia, to achieve in preparation for Christianity. But they also came together with Aristotle and Alexander themselves who were then in the spiritual world. The impulse of which these two individualities were the bearers could not take effect on the earth at that time because it counted upon an abandonment of the old, nature-inspired Christianity that had still been reflected in the teachings of Chartres where, as in Arthur's Round Table, a pagan Christianity, a pre-Christian Christianity prevailed. In the days of the Teachers of Chartres it was not possible for the Aristotelians, for those who had established and promoted Alexandrianism, to be on the earth. Their time came a little later, from the 13th century onwards.

But in the intervening period something of great significance took place. When the Teachers of Chartres and those who were associated with them had passed through the gate of death into the spiritual world, they came together with souls who were preparing to descend to the physical world and who were eventually led by their karma to the Order paramountly connected with the cultivation of knowledge in the Aristotelian form: the Order of the

Dominicans. The men of Chartres came together with these other souls who were preparing to descend.

Using trivial words of modern speech, I will now describe what then transpired. At the turning-point of the 12th and 13th centuries, at the beginning of the 13th century, a kind of conference took place between the souls who had just arrived in the spiritual world and the souls who were about to descend. And the momentous agreement was reached, that Sun-Christianity as expressed, for example, in the Grail-principle and also in the teachings of Chartres, should now be united with Aristotelianism. Those who descended to earth became the founders of Scholasticism, the spiritual significance of which has never been truly assessed and in which, to begin with, men could only hope to win the day for their view of personal immortality in the Christian sense by advocating it in the most radical, extreme way. The Teachers of Chartres had laid less emphasis upon this principle of the personal immortality of man. They still inclined to the view that having passed through the gate of death the soul returns to the bosom of the Divinity. They spoke far less of personal, individual immortality than did the Dominican Schoolmen.

Many significant happenings were connected with what was here taking place. For example: When one of the Schoolmen had come down from the spiritual world to work for the spread of Christianity in an Aristotelian form, he had not, to begin with, been able fully to grasp the essential import of the Grail-principle. Karma had willed it so. And here lies the reason for the comparatively late appearance of Wolfram von Eschenbach's version of the Grail story. Another soul, who came down to the earth somewhat later than the first, brought with him the impulse that was necessary, and within the Dominican Order deliberations took place between an older and a younger Dominican as to how Aristotelianism might be united with the Christianity which, inspired more by nature and the workings of nature, had prevailed in King Arthur's Round Table.

Then the time came for those individualities who had been teachers in the Dominican Order also to return to the spiritual world. And now the great agreement was reached under the leadership of Michael himself who looking down to the Intelligence that was now on the earth gathered his own around him: spiritual beings belonging to the super-sensible worlds, a great host of elemental spirits, and many, many discarnate human souls who were longing for a

renewal of Christianity. It was too early, yet, for this to take effect in the physical world. But a great and mighty super-sensible School was instituted under the leadership of Michael, embracing all those souls in whom the impulses of paganism still echoed on but who were nevertheless longing for Christianity, and those souls who had already lived on the earth during the early centuries of Christendom and who bore Christianity within them in the form it had then assumed. A Michael host gathered together in super-sensible realms, receiving in the spiritual world the teachings which had been imparted by the Michael Teachers in the old Alexander time, in the time of the Grail tradition and which had also taken effect in impulses like that going out from Arthur's Round Table.

Christian souls of every type and quality felt drawn to this Michael-community where, on the one side, deeply significant teaching was imparted concerning the ancient Mysteries and the spiritual impulses at work in olden days, while, on the other, a vista was opened into the future when' in the last third of the 19th century, Michael would again be working on earth and when all the teachings given forth in this heavenly School under Michael's own leadership in

the 15th and 16th centuries, were to be carried down to the earth.

If you seek for the souls who gathered around this School of Michael at that time, preparing for the later period on earth, you will find among them very many who now feel the urge to come to the Anthroposophical Movement. Karma has so guided these souls that in the life between death and a new birth at that time they thronged around Michael, preparing to carry down a Cosmic Christianity again to the earth.

The fact that the karma of very many of the souls who have come into the Anthroposophical Movement with real sincerity is connected with these preliminary conditions and antecedents, makes the Anthroposophical Movement into the true Michael Movement, the Movement that is predestined to bring about the renewal of Christianity. This lies in the karma of the Anthroposophical Movement. It lies, too, in the karma of many individuals who have come with sincerity into that Movement. To carry into the world the Michael Impulse which in this way can be pictured in all its concrete reality, which is betokened by many a sign on the earth today and also comes strikingly to expression in the wonderful play of nature-forces

around the ruins of Arthur’s castle — this is the task of the Anthroposophical Movement in a very special sense. For in the course of the centuries the Michael Impulse must find its way into the world of men if civilisation is not to perish from the earth.

This was what I wanted to inscribe in your hearts in the lecture for which time was fortunately available today.

Karmic Relationships, VIII: Lecture IV

We shall best understand how karma is anchored in the individual and in the evolution of humanity, and how the single facts of karma lend themselves to description, if we begin by considering how human consciousness has evolved since the time when, even in his ordinary life, man had a direct, elementary perception of his karma. To-day it is a fact that in his waking consciousness man knows nothing of his karma. The world in which he lives from awaking to falling asleep prevents him from having any direct knowledge of his karma. But humanity has not always lived in the state of consciousness that is considered normal to-day. In olden times, moreover during the earlier Post-Atlantean periods of evolution, quite different states of consciousness prevailed, even in the everyday life of man. There are three states or conditions of normal consciousness to-day — I have often described them to you. Firstly, there is waking consciousness; secondly, dream-consciousness into which scattered reminiscences of the day's experiences make their way but mingled, too, with influences from the spiritual world; and lastly, sleep-consciousness proper, in which dimness and darkness

surround the human soul and consciousness sinks away, so to speak, into unconsciousness.

Waking consciousness.

Dream consciousness.

Sleep consciousness.

It was not always thus. There was a time in man’s evolution when the experiences of his everyday consciousness took quite different forms. Let us look back some eight or ten thousand years to the epoch immediately following the Atlantean catastrophe whereby many widespread forms of civilisation and culture were wiped out of existence.

It was an epoch when land began to arise where formerly there had been sea, and sea to cover tracts that had once been land, a time moreover when the earth was destined to pass through a period of intense cold. We discover there a humanity which had survived the Atlantean catastrophe and was also endowed with three distinct kinds of consciousness but of an essentially different character from those of to-day. The prosaic, everyday consciousness of modern man in his waking hours, by which he sees other human beings and the creatures and happenings of nature in sharp outlines — this the men of those

ancient times did not possess. They saw the human being without sharp contours, extending in all directions into the Spiritual, spreading out into the aura; and in this aura they saw his soul. Animals too were seen in great and mighty auras; in their case it was the inner processes — digestion, breathing and so forth — that became visible in the aura. Plants reached up with their blossoms into a sort of cloud which permanently surrounded the Earth. Everything was bathed in a dying astral light. The day-consciousness of men who lived directly after the Atlantean Flood was a gradually fading astral vision of the physical world. I say “fading,” for in its power of giving light it was gradually waning away; before the Atlantean catastrophe this power of vision in astral light had been much stronger and more intense.

The awakening to this condition of consciousness — for the entering into it may be compared to an awakening — was very different from the awakening of normal man to-day, where the soul is confronted with chaotic dreams before passing into the waking consciousness of day. When these people of antiquity awakened it was no mere world of dreams that invaded their consciousness; they were within a world of reality of which they knew also that therein they had been among spiritual Beings of the higher

Hierarchies and elementary spirit-beings. “Waking up” was for them as it might be with a man of to-day who leaves a place in which he has had many experiences and goes somewhere else where in a sphere of new experiences he remembers the others. When in those ancient times a man entered waking life, he had the new experiences of day; but the remembrances remained with him of how he had been in another world, with other beings, not with the physical human beings who together with the plants and animals are generally around him, but with disembodied human souls living between death and a new birth, and with other beings, too, who never incarnate on the earth.

Man felt that he had departed from beings dwelling in the cosmos and was now placed into another world, into the world of physical experience between birth and death, Nevertheless he still preserved a memory of the spiritual world, the world through which human beings pass between death and a new birth. Vision of the spiritual world still streamed into his already fading astral vision. The condition of consciousness in which man to-day lives among purely physical beings did not then exist at all. In those times men had the following experience — it was not a dream but a picture that was graphic and real: when they passed into the day-consciousness and looked at trees,

animals, mountains, rocks and clouds, they felt that this was the same world in which were living those spirit-beings and human souls who were not incarnate on the earth but living in the spiritual world that is man's habitation between death and a new birth. And then there came to these men a concretely real picture of how these beings pass into the trees and rocks while man is in his waking consciousness, how they disappear into the depths of the mountains or rise up to the heights of the clouds, steal away into all the created things of outer physical nature.

On going into a forest, a man would, for example, notice a tree and know that it was the hiding place of a being with whom he had been together in the night. Men then saw clearly, as an Initiate can still see to-day, how spirit-beings made their way into physical habitations as though into their homes. No wonder that all these things passed over into the myths and that men talked of tree-spirits, water-spirits, spirits of clouds and mountains, for they saw their companions of the night disappearing into the mountains, into the waves, into the clouds, into the plants and the trees.

Such was early dawn in the experience of the soul: men saw the spirit-world disappearing into the physical world of sense. They spoke reverently of the

great and lofty Spirits as taking rest by day in these physical habitations; they spoke of the lesser, elementary beings who live among men and often among animals, as lurking in the things of nature. They expressed it even roguishly. But whether expressed in sublime and reverent language or in pleasantries, it was exactly what they felt about this condition of early dawn in the soul’s experience.

Picture it to yourselves. A human being had been in a spiritual world during the last phase of his sleep; it was when he awoke, and only then, that he clearly remembered having been in this spiritual world. How was this? Why did he only see this spiritual, super-sensible world as he awoke, when the spirits were already disappearing? Why did he only then see this spiritual, super-sensible world in which he lived between death and birth? It was because in those days, when during the last phase of his sleep man was able to see the spirit-world, he experienced yet a third condition of consciousness which conjured up another, an entirely different world before his soul. For it was so that during the time he was “asleep” in his earthly existence and present with power of vision in the spiritual world, he looked back on the evolution of his own karma.

This third state of consciousness experienced by men during the epoch immediately following the Atlantean catastrophe, consisted in a vision of karma. This vision of their own karma was an absolute reality to them.

Waking consciousness .... Fading astral vision.

Dream consciousness ..... Vision of the spiritual world.

Sleep consciousness ..... Vision of karma.

As the three states of consciousness alternate in the life of man to-day, so did ancient man experience successively the three conditions of a darkening astral vision, a vision of spiritual worlds and a vision of karma.

It is a fact that in olden times a vision of karma was a reality of consciousness for man; we can truly say that man once had a consciousness by means of which he beheld the reality of karma.

Evolution then took the following course. First of all this vision of karma ceased in the sleep that was of course no sleep as we understand it. The vision of karma began to grow dim. Of the facts of karma there only remained the knowledge possessed by the Initiates in the Mysteries. That which had once been

vision and actual experience became a matter of learning and erudition. The ancient consciousness darkened and there only remained — so it was in the old Chaldean-Babylonian-Egyptian period — the power to look up into the spiritual world. Thus, in the centuries which preceded the Christian epoch, a vision of the super-sensible world still came about quite naturally, but the facts about karma were only taught, they were no longer *seen.* In the times immediately preceding the Christian era there was still an intense consciousness of the spiritual world, of the world in which man lives between death and a new birth, although the consciousness of karma had faded and was simply not there for humanity in general when the Christian era began. It is therefore understandable that special emphasis was laid upon man’s connection with the spiritual world while he is in the disembodied state. Especially in the ancient Egyptian conception we can discern this intensely strong consciousness of the spiritual world, a purified, and clear-sighted consciousness of the world which man enters through the gate of death, when he becomes Osiris. But there is no consciousness any longer of repeated earthly lives.

Then came the gradual approach of the time which has now reached its apex and properly belongs to the

humanity of our day. Astral vision has sunk into the prosaic, matter-of-fact consciousness we have in ordinary life between awaking and falling asleep, when we only perceive, for example, that insignificant part of man which is enclosed by his skin and consists in flesh and bones and different vessels; that is all we see in our day-consciousness. One can well understand that people want to array it in all kinds of so-called beautiful clothes in an attempt to give it some importance, since deep down in the sub-consciousness there is a feeling that in itself it is of no significance and belongs, rightly, in the radiant, glowing garment of the aura, of the astral and Ego nature. And when men became aware of the change from the vision that sees the human being in his aura to the vision that sees only the unimportant, bodily part of him, they endeavoured to imitate in the clothing what had once been seen as the aura; so that the fashions of old — if I may put it so — were in a certain sense copies of the aura. As for modern fashions, well, I can assure you they are no such thing!

The consciousness of the super-sensible world has taken on the form of chaotic dreaming. Man dreams it away! And in respect of the karma-consciousness, man is fast asleep. He would have the consciousness of karma if that part of his consciousness which is

dreamless between falling asleep and awakening were suddenly to awake. Then he would have the consciousness of karma. Thus in the course of ten thousand years or thereabouts, the great change has taken place. Man “wakes” away — not only “sleeps” away — the spiritual reality in the physical world. He “wakes” away the Spiritual in nature, he “dreams” away the true spiritual world, he “sleeps” away his karma.

This development was necessary, as I have often told you, in order that the consciousness of freedom might arise. But humanity must now again emerge from its present condition of consciousness.

We have heard that what was a natural, albeit a dreamlike state of consciousness in olden times, namely knowledge of the super-sensible world and of karma, gradually grew dim and then became Mystery-teaching, while in the modern age of materialism it has been entirely lost. But in this age the possibility must again be found of building a bridge to consciousness both of the super-sensible world and of karma.

This means, in other words: When we picture to ourselves how in olden times at early dawn, the spirit-

beings with whom man lived from falling asleep to awakening hid themselves in trees and clouds, in mountains and rocks, so that in the day man could say to himself when he saw a tree or a rock or a spring: “A spirit has been enchanted into it, a spirit with whom I was together during my sleep-consciousness” — so now, by accepting the new Initiation-Science, we must learn in our present day-consciousness to recognise the spirit and as we look at every rock or tree or cloud or star, or sun or moon, to recognise the spiritual beings in all their diversity.

We must set out on the path that leads to this. We must prepare for the time when it shall be even so. As truly as a man of olden time, on awakening, saw the spirit-beings with whom he had lived during the night steal into the trees and rocks, so truly for modern man shall the spirit-beings steal forth again from tree and rock and spring!

It can really happen, and in this way. A man can lay aside the standpoint of ordinary prejudice in which he has been living, into which even children in the kindergarten are led to-day; he can put aside the prejudices that make him imagine he cannot with healthy human understanding see into the spiritual world. And when the Initiate comes and tells of things

of the spiritual world and of events that happen there, then, although he cannot yet himself see, nevertheless by making use of his unprejudiced human understanding, he can be enlightened by the communications that are given concerning the spiritual worlds. This is indeed, and under all circumstances, the right first step for each one to-day.

But difficulties are always cropping up … Last year, after one of my lectures on how to attain knowledge of the spiritual worlds, a well-meaning paragraph appeared in a newspaper of some standing. We can really call it “well-meaning” and even “respectable” as compared with many vehement expressions of opposition to Anthroposophy to-day! In this lecture I had pointed out that there is no need to become clairvoyant in order to have knowledge of the spiritual world, but that when the seer imparts the knowledge it can be received and understood by the healthy human intellect. I had emphasised this very strongly. The man who wrote the paragraph said in all good faith: “Steiner wants to apply the healthy human intellect to knowledge of the super-sensible world. But so long as the human intellect remains healthy it can certainly know nothing of a super-sensible world; as soon as it does, it is no longer healthy.” I think I have never heard it put so honestly before! For it is after all

what everyone is bound to say if he denies to the healthy human intellect a knowledge of the super-sensible world, and if he speaks in the usual way of the boundaries of knowledge. Either he must give up the present point of view, or he must agree with this assertion; no other way is really honest.

A modern Initiate can speak from clear and conscious knowledge of how from every star a spirit-being is released, of how other spirit-beings are released from plants. They come forward to meet us as soon as we pass beyond external sense-observation. Every time we go out into nature we may see all around where nature begins to be a little elemental, kobold-like elementary beings coming out of their stony shelters; if we become friendly with them, especially with the elementary beings of the mineral world, we can see behind them higher Beings who finally lead up to the First Hierarchy, to the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.

It is a fact that if the exercises given in my book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment* are practised regularly with strong inner energy, selflessness and devotion, they will lead — provided we have the necessary courage — to a new power of perception. We become able to see, for instance, in

certain strata of the mountains, whole worlds of elemental beings lying hidden in rock and stone. They come forth on every side, they steal out, they grow big — and we discover that they have only been as it were rolled up and packed tight into these fragments of the elementary world. Beings are present in the mineral kingdom of nature, especially where the earth begins to grow green, and feels so fresh that we can scent its aroma and the aroma of the plants that cover it. But when we enter this sphere of elemental beings, we find that they can indeed inspire us with fear. For the beings we thus encounter are incredibly clever. We must be humble enough to say to ourselves, when we see these little dwarf-like beings emerging from the objects of nature: “How stupid man is! and how clever is this elemental world!” And because many do not like to say this in earnest, do not like even to admit that judged by spiritual perception a little new-born child is much wiser than a learned scholar, therefore these elementary beings withdraw from man’s vision. If however we can discern them, the horizon is widened and the foreground opened up to us by these clever, playful little sprites leads away into a background that reaches right up to the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.

Thus by means of the exercises to which I referred, a man whose consciousness has been made clear and quick by the study of what humanity has learned through modern natural science, can enter this world of elemental beings, and thence a higher world. If by a loving surrender to nature we thus acquire a consciousness that is not “sicklied o’er” by the authority-ridden knowledge that holds the ground to-day, we may gradually rise through Initiation-knowledge to that knowledge which humanity has lost.

And he who eventually attains the faculty to see the tree-spirits come forth from the trees — the same that the ancients saw stealing away in the dawn, and darting out again in the evening twilight — he will also be able, as he approaches a human being, to see emerge from him the figures of his earlier lives together with the evolution of his karma. For this kind of vision leads on to a vision of karma.

In the mineral world, where at first we perceive the clever, mischievous little dwarfs, the vision leads us to the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.

In the plant world, the vision leads us to the Exusiai, Dynamis and Kyriotetes.

In the animal world (when we see emerge from the animals their own spiritual beings) we are led to a vision of the Archai, Archangels and Angels.

And in the human kingdom the vision leads to karma.

Behind the manifestations of the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, behind all the other Beings of the higher Hierarchies, behind all the elemental nature-spirits who startle us by their cleverness when they dart forth from the minerals, or who come to meet us with their gentle importunities from the plant world, behind all that comes from the animals — fierce, passionate and violent as that may be at times, and also icy cold — behind all that stands here so to speak as a foreground, we face the overwhelming, the sublime manifestations of karma. For behind all the mysteries of the world there lies, in truth, the great mystery of human karma.

Having thus prepared our hearts and minds in the right way, we shall pass on in the remaining lectures to speak of particular facts of karma.

Karmic Relationships, VIII: Lecture V

When we look back over the historical evolution of mankind and see how event follows event in the course of the ages, we are accustomed to regard these events as though we might find in more recent times the effects and results of earlier ages, as though we could speak of cause and effect in history in the same way as we do in connection with the external physical world.

We are however bound to admit that when we do look at history in this way, nearly all of it remains unexplained. We shall not, for example, succeed in explaining the Great War simply as an effect of the events that took place from the beginning of the century until the year 1914. Neither shall we succeed in explaining the French Revolution at the end of the 18th century out of the events that preceded it. Many theories of history are put forward but they do not carry us very far, and in the last resort we cannot but deem them artificial.

The truth is that the events in human history only become capable of explanation when we look at the personalities who play a decisive part in these events,

in respect of their repeated lives on earth. And it is also true that when we have given attention to this study for a considerable time, when we have observed the karma of historical personages as it shows itself in the course of their lives on earth, then and only then shall we acquire the right mood of soul to go into the matter of our own karma. Let us then to-day study karma as it shows itself in history. We will take a few historical personages who have done something or other that is known to us, and see how this deed or course of action may be traced from that which was written into their karma from their earlier incarnations.

It will in this way become clear to us that the things that happen in one epoch of history have really been brought over by human beings from earlier epochs. And as we learn to take quite seriously — it is too often considered as mere theory — all that is said about karma and repeated earth-lives, as we come to place it before us in precise and concrete detail, we shall be able to say: All of us who are sitting here have been on the earth many times before and we have brought with us into this present earth-life the fruits of earlier earth-lives.

It is only when we have learned to be quite earnest about this that we have any right to speak of the

perception of karma as something that we *know.* But the only way to learn to perceive karma is to take the ideas of karma and put them as great questions to the history of man. Then we shall no longer say: What happened in 1914 is the result of what happened in 1910, and what happened in 1910 is the result of what happened in 1900, and so on. Then we shall try instead to understand how the personalities who make their appearance in life themselves bring over from earlier epochs that which shows itself in a later one. It is only on this path that we shall arrive at a true and genuine study of history, beholding the external events against the background of human destinies.

History sets us such a number of riddles! But many a riddle is cleared up if we set about studying it in the way I have described. People appear sometimes quite suddenly in history, shooting in as it were like meteors. You examine their education and upbringing — it affords no explanation whatever. You examine the age to which they belong — again you can find no clue to the problem of their appearance in this particular time. Karmic connections alone will afford the true explanation.

I will speak of one or two such personalities who have lived in times not very far distant from our own,

and whose lives readily suggest the double question: What were their circumstances in an earlier earth-life, and what have they brought over from that earlier life that has made them as they are now?

Or again, let us take the case of personalities of an earlier age, who lived a long time ago in the history of evolution. Here we are anxious to know when they came again to earth, and what sort of people they were in a later incarnation. If in an earlier life they attained to fame and renown, we ask ourselves: What did they become when they returned? We would like to be able to add other lives to the one of which we read in history; perhaps they were historical characters a second time, or perhaps renowned in some other way: in any case we would like to know the connections.

Now connections of this kind are exceedingly difficult to investigate. Let me begin by giving you an idea of how, when we want to research into karmic connections, we have to look at the *whole* human being and not merely at what often strikes us at first sight as being particularly characteristic.

I should like here to give an example which may seem rather personal. I once had a Geometry teacher

whom I loved dearly. It was not difficult for me to love him because during my boyhood I was exceedingly fond of Geometry. But this teacher was really quite unusual. He had a peculiar talent for Geometry that fascinated me, although people who are never deeply impressed by other human beings might have thought him dry and uninteresting. Notwithstanding this somewhat prosaic nature, however, he was a man whose influence could have a strongly artistic effect upon one. I always had an intense desire to unravel the secret of this personality and I tried to apply the methods of occult research by which this end can be attained.

I spoke in Torquay, and will only now repeat in brief, of how, if one progresses in the development of the occult forces of the soul in the way I described in the lecture here a year ago [*Man as a Picture of the Living Spirit.* Rudolf Steiner Press, 1972.] and reaches the stage of empty consciousness, and if then this empty consciousness becomes filled with what resounds from the spiritual world, it is possible — if one adds to this experience such things as I spoke of in this morning's lecture — to have impressions, intuitions that are as exact as a mathematical truth and point from certain phenomena in the present life of an individual to an earlier life.

Now the wonderful way in which this teacher of mine worked in Geometry, his whole method of handling the subject, made me deeply interested in him. And this interest remained, even after his death at an advanced age. Destiny never brought me into actual contact with him again after I left the school in which he taught, but his personality stood before me in the spirit as a reality, until the day of his death and after his death; he stood there before me in particular clarity in all the detail of his bearing and actions.

Now what made it possible for me to receive out of his present life an intuition of his previous earth-life, or at any rate the previous earth-life of importance for him, was the fact that he had a club foot! One leg was shorter than the other.

When we remember that in the transition from one earth-life to another, what was head-organisation in the previous life becomes foot- or limb-organisation, and what was foot- or limb-organisation becomes head-organisation, then we shall readily understand that a bodily trait of this kind may have a certain significance, inasmuch as the life of the individual stretches across repeated earthly existences. This club foot enabled me to trace the individuality of my Geometry teacher back into the past. He was not a

man of any renown but he was a person who made upon me at any rate and upon others too, a deep and lasting impression; he had an extraordinarily strong influence upon many lives. And I was able to discover, starting from the fact of his club foot, that a study of his personality led one back to the very same place in history where one has to look for *Lord Byron.*

Now Lord Byron too had a club foot. This is an external physical characteristic, but what is external and bodily in one life is, in another, a quality of soul-and-spirit; and this characteristic led me to recognise that the two personalities who were not now contemporaries (for my Geometry teacher lived later than Byron) had, in an earlier earth-life, been together. In the modern age they had lived as poet and geometrician, each a genius in his own line, the one becoming widely famous, the other making only upon a few individuals an intimate impression which influenced the shaping of their destinies. In an earlier life, however, in medieval times, they had been side by side; together they had listened to the legend of the Palladium, the holy treasure that had once been in Troy, had then come over with Aeneas and was regarded by Rome as the talisman upon which her fortunes depended. The Emperor Constantine afterwards took it across to Constantinople and the

success and happiness of Constantinople in its history depended on this Palladium. The legend, looking prophetically into the future, went on to say that whoever acquires the Palladium, his shall be the rulership of the world.

This is not the time for me to enlarge upon the merits and content of the legend. I will only say that these two individuals who were at that time incarnated in what is to-day called Russia, undertook together, with warm enthusiasm, the journey to Constantinople in search of the Palladium. They were not able to obtain possession of it but they kept the enthusiasm alive in their hearts.

And now we can actually see how Lord Byron resolved to go in search of the Palladium in another guise when he took part in the Greek struggle for freedom. If you study carefully the life of Lord Byron, you will find that a great deal in this gifted poet is due to the fact that in an earlier earth-life he had been spurred on by enthusiasm for such an enterprise.

And again, as I look back upon my Geometry teacher with his modest, unassuming character, I can see how he owed his charm and endearing qualities in this life to the enterprise of that earlier time, although

his part, then, had been a secondary one. Had he taken an equal share in it with the individuality who became Lord Byron, he would have been a contemporary of his again in the later life.

I bring this example before you in order that you may realise that we have to look at the *whole* human being if we want to investigate karmic connections; we have even, for example, to note bodily defects or deformities. If we find that a person has some distinguishing talent of a spiritual kind in one earth-life, let us say has been a great painter, we must not draw the abstract conclusion that he was a great painter in his former earth-life. What we see on the surface are only the waves thrown up by karma which flows in deeper waters below and has to do with body, soul and spirit. We must take the whole life into the horizon of our vision.

It will frequently happen that little characteristic actions of a person, such as the way he moves his fingers, will lead the way to karmic connections far sooner than any outstanding activities he may have undertaken and that are from every other aspect of more consequence. I once had the experience of being able to arrive at deep and intimate karmic connections in the case of a certain person by giving attention to

quite an incidental peculiarity that made a strong impression upon me. He used to give lessons in a school, and on every occasion, before beginning his lesson, he took out his pocket handkerchief and blew his nose. He never by any chance began to teach without doing this. It was a deeply-rooted characteristic in him. The impression it made upon me was significant and I was able to read in it a pointer to important features of his former earth-life. It is in these signs that we have to find some significant trait in the person that will often take us back to the earlier incarnation.

And now I would like to show you how interesting from a historical point of view the question of karma becomes. Let us take a few concrete cases, for example, the case of *Swedenborg,* who appears in such a striking way in the 18th century. Last year I spoke of him in Penmaenmawr [See: Lecture 7, *The Evolution of Consciousness*. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1966.] from quite a different standpoint. I spoke then of his spiritual qualities but I did not touch upon his karma.

Swedenborg is a very remarkable figure. Until he was more than 40 years old he was a great and notable scholar, of such repute that the Swedish

Academy of Science is even now still occupied in bringing out the numerous scientific works he left behind — purely scientific works. When we know that Arrhenius, for example, has concerned himself with their publication, we shall conclude that they must be un-spiritual in the very highest degree. Otherwise Arrhenius would scarcely interest himself in them! Nobody could say that up to his fortieth year Swedenborg had anything whatever to do with spiritual matters in his knowledge and learning. Then, all of a sudden, he began — as the scientists put it — to go crazy, to give out imposing and magnificent descriptions of the spiritual world as he had seen it. It was something entirely new in Swedenborg's life, shooting in like a comet.

We ask ourselves: What can there have been in an earlier earth-life to produce such a result?

Or again, take a personality like *Voltaire.* I am choosing a few great personalities whose lives leave us with unanswered questions. Voltaire is one who may be called an absolutely incommensurable person. We are puzzled to know how this strange character, now scornful and contemptuous, now pious not to say unctuous, could grow up as a product of his age, or

again how he could have the tremendous influence he did have upon it.

With what irony does destiny work! Voltaire had a deep influence upon the King of Prussia; and this connection between Voltaire and the King of Prussia was a most significant factor in the destiny of the spiritual life of Europe. One cannot help asking: What really lies behind all this in the deeper background of history?

We may take still a third case, and One not without meaning for our own day, when many things are thrusting themselves upon our notice from the background of existence. Take the case of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, who died in the 16th century. When we follow the remarkable destiny of the Jesuit Order that he founded, we are compelled to ask the question: What kind of life had Ignatius Loyola after he passed through the gate of death? And if he has come again, what part has he played in the more recent history of mankind? There you have questions which, if they can be answered, may well throw a light upon the background of very much that has happened in history.

Intuitive vision led one back, for example, to a soul who lived in the 5th century A.D., not long after St. Augustine, and who was educated in the schools of Northern Africa, as was St. Augustine himself. In these schools, the personality of whom I am speaking became acquainted with all that proceeded from the Manichean wisdom and from the wisdom of the East which had, of course, undergone such great changes in a later age. In subsequent wanderings he came across to Spain and there absorbed what may be called early Kabbalistic doctrine, teachings which open out a vista of great cosmic relationships. Education and experience thus equipped him with an extraordinary wide outlook, and at the same time with knowledge that sprang from two main sources — one already in decadence and the other just beginning to flourish. The result was to give him in one respect a deepened life of soul, but at the same time to leave him in uncertainty and doubt.

After many travels on earth, this personality passed at length through the gate of death; and at a definite point between death and rebirth his karma brought him in touch with a particular Genius, a particular spiritual Being belonging to the world of Mars.

You know that in the period between death and a new birth a human being builds up spiritually the karma he has afterwards to bring into physical embodiment in later earth-lives. Now not only do other human souls with whom he is karmically connected share in this work with him, but the Beings, too, of the various spiritual Hierarchies. These Beings have tasks to fulfil as the result of what a human soul brings over from earlier earth-lives. And so this soul of whom I am speaking was engaged in building up his karma for the next life on earth. Now it happened that through all he had received and done, through all he had thought and felt in earlier lives, especially in the life that was particularly significant and of which I have just given you a brief sketch, he was brought very near to a spiritual Being belonging to the world of Mars. He acquired thereby a strongly aggressive nature, but on the other hand also a wonderful gift of speech; for Mars Beings prepare from out of the cosmos all that belongs to speech and language and place it into the karma of human beings. Wherever artistic skill and fluency in speech show themselves in the karma of a human being, these are to be traced to the fact that his karmic experiences have brought him into the vicinity of Mars Beings.

The individuality of whom I am speaking had been in the company of one particular Mars Being — a Being who now began to interest me intensely when I had recognised him in connection with this soul. The individuality himself appeared again on earth in the 18th century, as Voltaire. Thus Voltaire bore within him from his earlier earth-life the learning of the schools of Northern Africa and of Spain, elaborated and transformed through the fact that the shaping of his karma had taken place with the help of this particular Mars Being.

When you consider Voltaire’s great gift of language and on the other hand his instability in many things, when you consider his writings, not so much their content as his manner and habit of working, you will come to understand how it all follows quite naturally from the karmic influences I have described. And when we observe how Voltaire comes over from his earlier earth-life with his aggressiveness, his fluency of language, his power of satire, his only partially concealed lack of integrity, yet at the same time his genuine and ardent enthusiasm for truth — when we study all this in connection, first, with his former incarnation and then with his association with the Mars Being, the personality of Voltaire and still more

from an occult point of view this. Mars Being, will begin to be of great interest to us.

It was my task at one time to follow this Mars Being and through this Being certain events on earth received great illumination. We meet in history with the remarkable figure of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus. Ignatius Loyola was, to begin with, a soldier. He was stricken with a severe illness and in the course of it was inwardly impelled to carry out all kinds of soul-exercises which were the means of filling him with such spiritual strength that he became able to set himself the task of rescuing the old Catholic Christianity from the spread of Evangelicalism. And thanks to the forces he had acquired through having a wounded leg — that is the interesting point — he succeeded in founding the Order of the Jesuits, which introduces occult exercises of the will in a most powerful manner into practical religious life. What we may think of this from other points of view is not here our concern. Ignatius Loyola, in establishing the Jesuit Order, sought to represent the cause of Jesus on earth on a grand scale, in a purely material way, through the training of the will.

Anyone who studies the remarkable life of Ignatius Loyola cannot fail to conceive a certain admiration for

it. And now if we pursue the matter further with the occult insight of Intuition, we come to something very significant.

Ignatius Loyola was the means of starting the Jesuit Order which has done more than anything else to bring Christianity right down into the earthly, material life, accompanied, however, with a strong spiritual power. The Jesuit Order has one rule which goes altogether against the grain in men of the present age but which, notwithstanding, has contributed more to its effectiveness than any other factor. Besides the usual monastic vows, besides the exercises, besides everything else that a candidate has to undergo before he can become a priest, the Order of the Jesuits has in addition this rule, namely that there shall be unconditional subjection to the command of the Pope of Rome. Whatever the Pope orders to be done, it is never asked in the Jesuit Order what opinions there may be about it. It is simply carried out because the Jesuits are convinced that higher things of the Spirit make themselves known through the Pope and that it behoves them, in unconditional obedience to Rome, to carry out the commands of this higher authority. A doubtful and precarious rule: nevertheless it implies a great selflessness that is present in Jesuitism and again signifies a tremendous increase of strength, for

everything a man does with intense energy, putting forth all his force and acting not on his own authority nor out of emotion — everything a man does in this way gives him extraordinary strength. It is a strength that moves, so to speak, in the lower clouds of material existence, but it is none the less a spiritual force. It is in truth a remarkable phenomenon.

And now, if we follow up these extraordinarily strange and imposing facts, we come to discover that the same Mars Genius who plays a part in the life of Voltaire, accompanied the life of Ignatius Loyola from the moment when he passed through the gate of death. The soul of Ignatius Loyola was perpetually under the super-sensible influence of this Mars Genius.

As soon as Ignatius Loyola had passed through death, things were immediately quite different for him than they are for other men. Other men do not at once lay aside the etheric body at death but only a few days later and have a brief retrospective vision of the past earth-life before entering upon the journey through the soul-world. In the case of Ignatius Loyola this retrospective vision lasted for a very long time. And by reason of the special kind of exercises that had been working in his soul, a close and intimate connection was able to be established between the

soul of Ignatius Loyola and the Mars Genius. For a strong and active affinity, an elective affinity so to speak, existed between this Mars Genius and all that had gone on in the soul of the sick soldier, who through the injury to his foot had been forced to take to his bed and from being a soldier had become a man who could not use his leg. All these circumstances had had a deep and powerful effect upon Loyola and when we look at the whole man it becomes clear. These circumstances led Ignatius Loyola into connection with the Mars Genius whom I had learned to know on another path of investigation. And what took shape through this connection made it possible for Ignatius Loyola to have this significant retrospect of his life which continued on and on for a long time, whereas in the ordinary way it lasts for only a few days after death. Loyola was able thereby to establish a retrospective connection as it were with those who came after him in the Jesuit Order. He remained united with his Order in the retrospect of his own life.

To this connection with its founder are due the forces that held the Order together, the forces that determined its strange and abnormal destiny and can be seen in its subjection in unquestioning obedience to the Pope — in spite of the repeal of this rule by the Pope himself — and in spite of the persecutions that

went on! But on the other hand all the things that the Jesuits themselves accomplished in the world are to be traced to the singular connection of which I have spoken.

Now this example, if we follow it further, can shed a wonderful light over certain historical events and connections. After Ignatius Loyola's death, his soul remained always in the vicinity of the earth — for one is near the earth so long as this retrospect lasts. Even if the retrospect is extended it cannot last many centuries for when it extends at all over any long period it is quite abnormal — but abnormal things do constantly occur in the great world-connections. And comparatively soon after his earth-life was over, Ignatius Loyola appeared again in the soul of Emanuel Swedenborg.

We have here arrived at a very astounding fact, but it is also extremely illuminating. Think of the light it sheds upon history! The Order of the Jesuits continues in existence … but the one who held it together up to a certain moment of time has become an entirely different person … he appears in the individuality of Emanuel Swedenborg. He became the spirit of Emanuel Swedenborg, and since that time the Jesuit Order has been guided by altogether different

impulses from those of its founder. We may frequently see in history how in the course of karma the founder of some undertaking or movement, or the persons who are deeply united with it, become separated from the movement they have founded and the movement passes over to quite other forces. So we learn how little meaning there is from a historical point of view to trace back the Jesuit Order to Ignatius Loyola. External history does so. Inner knowledge can never do so, for it sees how the individualities separate themselves from their movements.

In its external course, many a phenomenon in history is traced back to this or that founder. If, however, we come to know the later earth-life of the founder of some undertaking we may find that he has long ago separated himself from it. A great deal of what is set down as history simply loses all meaning when we are able and ready to face the occult facts that stand behind the evolution of karma.

That is one thing that emerges. The other is as follows.

The soul of Ignatius Loyola, now the soul of Swedenborg, entered an organism that had acquired its quite unusual soundness of head through the fact

of the injury to the leg from which Loyola had suffered in the former life. And this soul that had remained all the time in the vicinity of the earth, was not able, to begin with, to come down fully and completely into the new earthly incarnation. The body remained, up till the fortieth year, a remarkably healthy body with a sound and healthy brain, a healthy etheric body and a healthy astral body. With these sound and healthy organisations Swedenborg grew to be one of the greatest scholars of his time; but it was not until his early forties, when he had been through the period of the Ego-development and was entering on the development of the Spirit-Self, that he came under the influence of the Mars Genius of whom I have spoken. During the first forty years of Swedenborg's life this influence had been somewhat suppressed; but now he came directly under it and from this time on it is the *Mars Genius* that speaks through Emanuel Swedenborg, in all the spiritual knowledge he has of the universe.

And so in Swedenborg we have a man of genius, who gives us brilliant and magnificent description of the lands of the Spirits, albeit in pictures that are somewhat questionable. Thus has the mighty spiritual will of Ignatius Loyola found transformation.

It is always the case that if we follow up the real and actual karmic connections, we discover, as a rule, something that startles and astounds us. The ingenious speculations one so often hears about repeated earth-lives are ingenious speculations and nothing more. When investigation is really exact, the result is usually very startling, for the evolution of karma that moves forward from earth-life to earth-life is hidden deep, deep down below all that is experienced and lived out by man between birth and death.

I wanted to give you this example in order that you may see *how* deeply may be hidden that which flows in karma from earth-life to earth-life. You have seen it in a personality who is well known to us all. Only by investigating these hidden factors shall we arrive at the true explanations. And if you now study the life of Emanuel Swedenborg, knowing the connections of which I have told you, you will find how things become clear to you, one after another.

* * *

In the early years of this century I was several times in London. On the occasion of one of these visits I was prompted to make myself acquainted with an

extraordinarily significant personality — to begin with, simply in his writings. And as in those days there were rather longer intervals between the journeys than there are now, I obtained from the Theosophical Library the books he had written — the books that is to say, of Laurence Oliphant.

Laurence Oliphant is a remarkably interesting and significant personality: he strikes you in this way directly you begin to study his writings. These books deal with the similarities to be found in different religions, with spiritual religions, and so forth; and all of them bear evidence of a deep understanding of how in the various processes of his body and soul, man is connected with the secrets of the universe. When you read Oliphant’s writings you have the impression: Here is a picture of man in his earth-life that owes its inspiration to deep cosmic instincts. The processes of the earthly life of man that are connected with birth, embryonic life, descent and so forth, are described in such a way as to show how man, as microcosm, is wondrously rooted in the macrocosm.

Now I was very soon led in this study to a point where the figure of the dead Laurence Oliphant stood before me, but not in a form which suggested that I had here to do with the individuality as he was then

living after death; it was rather that what was contained in these writings (which may be described as setting forth a kind of cosmic physiology, a cosmic anatomy) began to come alive, began to spiritualise; and a figure appeared, not all at once entirely clear, but unquestionably there before me on many different occasions. I was able to make occult investigations into the matter and I could never do otherwise than bring the figure into connection with what came to me from reading Oliphant. It was very often there before me. At first I was often unable to satisfy myself as to what this figure wanted, what its manifestations meant. The whole manner of its appearance however, left me in no doubt whatever that it was none other than the individuality of Laurence Oliphant; and it was likewise clear to me that this figure had had a long life in the time between death and a new birth — that is to say, the birth as Laurence Oliphant — probably only broken by one earth-life that was not very significant for the rest of the world. What might not then be hidden in the personality of Laurence Oliphant! In short, this appearance of the figure of Laurence Oliphant suggested significant questions of karma.

When I entered on an investigation of the karma, a spiritual Being became manifest who is engaged in the elaboration of human karma, in the same way as

the Mars Being of whom I told you in connection with Voltaire and with Ignatius Loyola.

Now one may get to know such Genii in the most varied ways. They are especially present when it is a question of undertaking spiritual investigation into that which appears, primarily, in physical manifestation among men on earth. I was always drawn to this kind of research. My *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* leads, as you know, to a treatment of the life of will from a cosmic standpoint. Such matters always interested me deeply. Then, again, the questions that now arise out of the tasks of the Anthroposophical Movement lead to investigations of karma — I do not say our task is exhausted in the investigation of karma for this can always only be a part of it — and the investigations of karma lead once more to Genii such as the Mars Genius of whom I have told you. These Genii are, however, also to be met with on the path of another kind of research to which I have alluded and the results of which appear in the book that Dr. Ita Wegman and myself have worked out together in the sphere of medicine. [*Fundamentals of Therapy: an Extension of the Art of Healing through Spiritual Knowledge*. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1967.] When one seeks in this way for an Initiate-knowledge of nature, one comes in a similar way to *Mercury Genii;*

these Mercury Genii approach one because they play a special part in the karma of human beings. When man is passing through the life between death and a new birth, he is first of all purged in respect of his moral qualities; this takes place under the influence of the Moon Beings. Through the Mercury Beings his illnesses are transformed into spiritual qualities. In the Mercury sphere the illnesses a man undergoes in life are transformed by the Mercury Genii into spiritual energies, spiritual qualities. That is an exceedingly important fact and one which leads further, namely to the investigation of questions of karma in matters that are in any way connected with disease.

Now the investigations which I described in Torquay led me into close contact with the spirit of *Brunetto Latini,* the teacher of Dante. When one penetrates into these spiritual worlds in the manner described, it also becomes possible to stand before individualities in the form in which they lived in a particular epoch. Thus one can stand face to face with Brunetto Latini, the great teacher of Dante in the 13th century. Brunetto Latini still possessed a knowledge whereby nature was seen, not in the abstraction of natural laws, but as under the influence of living spiritual Beings. On the way back to his native town of Florence from his post as Ambassador in Spain, Brunetto Latini heard all

kinds of reports that troubled and disturbed him, and in addition he had a slight sunstroke. In this condition and under the influence, too, of the pathological disturbances, glimpses came to him of nature in her creative work, of cosmic creation, and of the connection of man with the planetary world. What he was able to see was wonderful and sublime and no more than a shadow-picture of it subsequently found its way into the great work of Dante — the Divine Comedy.

But now if we follow this Brunetto Latini, we find that in a critical moment, when the knowledge was like to suffocate him, when it seemed to him that he might go astray from true knowledge and fall into error — in this critical moment, *Ovid* became his guide, Ovid, the Roman author of the *Metamorphoses* which contain such wonderful visions of the old Greek age, though expressed in the prosaic, characteristically Roman style.

And so we meet the individuality of Ovid together with Brunetto Latini. If we have a true grasp of the connection we can see Brunetto Latini, in the pre-Dante time, actually together with Ovid. Ovid is with him. And now, precisely in connection with the scientific, medical researches of which I was speaking,

Ovid revealed himself as Laurence Oliphant. The long life since the Ovid time, passing but once to earth again in the interval and then as a woman in an incarnation that had little significance for the world outside, came at length to this fulfilment. The content of the soul is transplanted into modern times, and Ovid appears again as Laurence Oliphant.

Nor is it Brunetto Latini alone but other personalities too of the Middle Ages who assert that Ovid was their guide. At first it sounds like a tradition that simply gets carried on. In reality, Ovid was the guide in the spiritual world for many Initiates, appearing again as Laurence Oliphant with his sublime treatment of physiology and pathology. This connection between Laurence Oliphant and Ovid is of most far-reaching import and is one of the most illuminating examples one could possibly find.

Karmic Relationships, VIII: Lecture VI

If we look back over the evolution of mankind since the Mystery of Golgotha, we get the impression that Christianity, the Christ Impulse, has only been able to live on within the European and American civilisations in the face of definite obstacles and in association with other streams of spiritual life. And a study of the growth and gradual development of Christianity reveals many remarkable facts.

To-day I want to describe in broad outlines the growth and development of Christianity in connection with what ought to live within the Anthroposophical Society: and not only ought to, but *can* live, because those persons who feel an honest and sincere urge towards Anthroposophy, have this urge from the very depths of their being.

If we take the facts of repeated earthly lives in all seriousness, we shall say: This inner urge to get away from the conceptions and habits of thought of those among whom life, education and social relationships have placed us, this urge that we feel to enter a stream of thought which really makes claims upon our

life of soul, must have its origin in karma, in the karma coming from earlier lives on earth.

Now if we study the question of karma in connection with those personalities who find themselves together in the Anthroposophical Movement, it transpires that, without exception, before their present earthly life they have had one other important incarnation since the Mystery of Golgotha. They were already on earth once since the time of the Mystery of Golgotha and are now there for the second time since that Event.

And then the great question arises: How has the previous earthly life, with respect to the Mystery of Golgotha, worked upon these personalities who now, out of their karma, feel the urge to enter the Anthroposophical Movement?

Even from exoteric study we find that men standing as firmly within the stream of Christianity itself as St. Augustine, have said: “Christianity did not begin with Christ; there were Christians before Christ, only they were not so called.” This is what St. Augustine says.

Those who penetrate more deeply into the spiritual mysteries of human evolution and can study these spiritual mysteries with Initiation Science, will strongly confirm such a view as is expressed by St. Augustine,

for it is a fact. But it becomes necessary, then, to know in what form that which through the Mystery of Golgotha became the historical Christ Impulse upon the earth, existed in earlier times.

To-day I can speak of this earlier form of Christianity by starting from impressions which came in a place not far distant from Torquay (where our Summer Course has been held), in Tintagel, whence proceeded the spiritual stream connected with King Arthur. It was possible to receive the impressions which can still come to-day at the spot where King Arthur's castle with its Round Table stood — impressions which come above all from the magnificent natural surroundings of this castle.

At this place where nothing but ruins remain of the old citadel of King Arthur, where we look back as if in memory across the centuries that have elapsed since the Arthur stream went out from thence, we realise how stone after stone has so crumbled away that there is hardly anything to be recognised of the old castles which once were inhabited by King Arthur and those around him. But when with the eye of spirit we look out from the place where the castle once stood, over the sea with its iridescent colours and breaking waves, the impression we get is that we are able at this place

to penetrate deeply into the elemental secrets of nature and of the cosmos.

 Diagram 1

And if we look back with occult sight, if we can visualise the point of time which lies a few thousand years ago, when the Arthur stream had its beginning, then we see that those who lived on Arthur’s Mount had, as is the case with all such occult centres, chosen this spot because the impulses necessary for the tasks they had set themselves, for their mission in the world, needed the play of those forces which nature there displayed before them.

I cannot say whether it is always so, but when I saw the view there was a most wonderful play of waves surging and rippling up from the depths — in itself one of the most beautiful sights in all nature. These waves hurl themselves against the walls of rock and as they fall back again in seething foam the elementary

spirits are able to rise up from below and come to living expression. From above, the sunlight is reflected in manifold forms in the waves of the air. This interplay of elemental nature from above and from below reveals the full power of the Sun and displays it in such a way that man is able to receive it into his being. Those who can imbibe what is given by this interplay of the beings born of the light above and the beings born in the depths below, receive the power of the Sun, the impulse of the Sun. It is a moment in which man can unfold what I will call “piety” — piety in the pagan sense. Christian piety is not the same as pagan piety which means inner surrender to the gods of nature working and weaving everywhere in the play of nature.

Those who lived around King Arthur absorbed this play of weaving, working nature into their very being. And most significant of all was what they were able to receive in the first centuries after the Mystery of Golgotha.

I want to tell you to-day about the character of this spiritual life that was connected with such centres as that of King Arthur’s Round Table. And I must begin by speaking of something that is known to you all.

When a human being dies, he leaves his physical body and still has his etheric body around him for a few days. After these few days have elapsed he lays aside his etheric body and lives on then in his astral body and Ego. What happens thus to the man who has passed through the gate of death, appears to the eye of vision as if the etheric being were dissolving. After death the etheric human being expands and expands, his actual form becoming more and more indefinite as he weaves himself into the cosmos.

A remarkable phenomenon, and the exact opposite of this other, occurred in the world-historic sense when the Mystery of Golgotha took place. What was it that happened then? Up to that time Christ had been a Sun Being, had belonged to the Sun. Before the Mystery of Golgotha had come to pass, the Knights of King Arthur’s Round Table stood on these rocks, gazed at the play between the Sun-born spirits and the Earth-born spirits, and felt that the forces living in this play of nature-spirits poured into their hearts and above all through their etheric bodies. Therewith they received into themselves the Christ Impulse which was then streaming away from the Sun and was living in everything that is brought into being by the Sun-forces.

And so, before the Mystery of Golgotha, the Knights of King Arthur received into themselves the Sun-Spirit, that is to say, the Christ as He was in pre-Christian times. And they sent their messengers out into all Europe to subdue the wild savagery of the astral bodies of the peoples of Europe, to purify and to civilise, for such was their mission. We see such men as these Knights of King Arthur's Round Table starting from this point in the West of England to bear to the peoples of Europe as they were at that time, what they had received from the Sun, purifying the astral forces of the then barbarous European population — barbarous at all events in Central and Northern Europe.

Then came the Mystery of Golgotha. What happened in Asia? Over yonder in Asia, the sublime Sun Being, Who was later known as the Christ, left the Sun. This betokened a kind of death for the Christ Being. He went forth from the Sun as we human beings go forth from the earth when we die. And as a man who dies leaves his physical body behind on the earth and his etheric body which is laid aside after three days is visible to the seer, so Christ left behind Him in the Sun that which in my book *Theosophy* is called "Spirit-Man," the seventh member of the human being.

Christ died to the Sun. He died cosmically, from the Sun to the earth. He came down to the earth. From the moment of Golgotha onwards His Life-Spirit was to be seen around the earth. We ourselves leave behind at death the Life-Ether, the etheric body, the life-body. After this cosmic Death, Christ left His Spirit-Man on the Sun, and around the earth, His *Life-Spirit.* So that after the Mystery of Golgotha the earth was swathed as it were by the Life-Spirit of the Christ.

Now the connections between places are not the same in the spiritual life as they are in physical life. The Life-Spirit of the Christ was perceived in the Irish Mysteries, in the Mysteries of Hibernia; and above all by the Knights of King Arthur's Round Table. So, up to the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, the Christ Impulse belonging to the Sun actually went out from this place where the impulses were received from the Sun. Afterwards the power of the Knights diminished but they lived at the time within this Life-Spirit which encircled the earth and in which there was this constant interplay of light and air, of the Spirits in the Elements from above and from below.

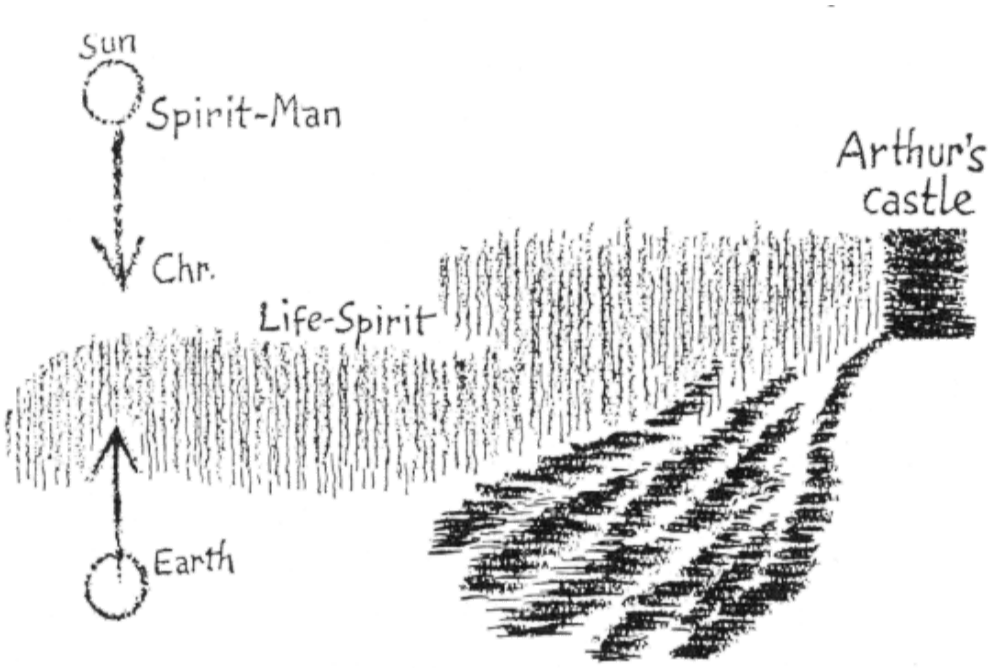
Try to picture to yourselves the cliff with King Arthur's castle upon it and from above the Sun-forces playing down in the light and air, and pouring

upwards from below the elementary beings of the earth. There is a living interplay between Sun and earth.

In the centuries which followed the Mystery of Golgotha this all took place within the Life-Spirit of the Christ. So that in the play of nature between sea and rock, air and light, there was revealed, as it were in spiritual light, the Event of Golgotha.

Understand me rightly, my dear friends. If in the first five centuries of our era men looked out over the sea, and had been prepared by the exercises practised by the twelve who were around King Arthur and who were concerned above all with the Mysteries of the Zodiac, if they looked out over the sea they could see not merely the play of nature but they could begin to read a meaning in it just as one reads a book instead of merely staring at it. And as they looked and saw, here a gleam of light, there a curling wave, here the sun mirrored on a rocky cliff, there the sea dashing against the rocks, it all became a flowing, weaving picture — a truth whose meaning could be deciphered. And when they deciphered it they knew of the spiritual Fact of the Mystery of Golgotha. The Mystery of Golgotha was revealed to them because the picture was all

irradiated by the Life-Spirit of Christ presented to them by nature.



Yonder in Asia the Mystery of Golgotha had taken place and its impulse had penetrated deeply into the hearts and souls of men. We need only think of those who became the first Christians to realise what a change had come about in their souls. While all this of which I have been telling you was happening in the West, the Christ Himself, the Christ Who had come down to earth leaving His Spirit-Man on the Sun and His Life-Spirit in the atmosphere around the earth, bringing down His Ego and His Spirit-Self to the earth — the Christ was moving from East to West in the hearts of men, through Greece, Northern Africa, Italy,

Spain, across Europe. The Christ worked here in the hearts of men, while over in the West He was working through nature.

And so on the one hand we have the story of the Mystery of Golgotha, legible in the Book of Nature for those who were able to read it, working from West to East. It represented, as it were, the science of the higher graduates of King Arthur's Round Table. And on the other hand we have a stream flowing from East to West, not in wind and wave, in air and water, not over hills or in the rays of the Sun, but flowing through the blood, laying hold of the hearts of men on its course from Palestine through Greece into Italy and Spain.

The one stream flows through nature; the other through the blood and the hearts of men. These two streams flow to meet one another. The pagan stream is still working, even to-day. It bears the pre-Christian Christ, the Christ Who was proclaimed as a Sun Being by those who were Knights of the Round Table, but also by many others *before* the Mystery of Golgotha actually took place. The pre-Christian Christ was carried through the world by this stream even in the age of the Mystery of Golgotha. And a great deal of this wisdom was carried forth into the world by the stream known as that of King Arthur and the Knights

of the Round Table. It is possible, even to-day, to discover these things. There *is* a pagan Christianity, a Christianity that is not directly bound up with the actual historical Event of Golgotha.

And coming upwards to meet this stream there is the form of Christianity that is connected directly with the Mystery of Golgotha, flowing through the blood, through the hearts and souls of men. Two streams come to meet one another — the *pre-Christian* Christ stream, etherealised as it were, and the *Christian* Christ stream. The one is known, subsequently, as the Arthur stream; the other as the Grail stream. Later on they came together; they came together in Europe, above all in the spiritual world.

How can we describe this movement? The Christ Who descended through the Mystery of Golgotha drew into the hearts of men. In the hearts of men He passed from East to West, from Palestine, through Greece, across Italy and Spain. The Christianity of the Grail spread through the blood and the hearts of men. The Christ took His way from East to West.

And to meet Him from the West there came the spiritual etheric *Image* of the Christ — the Image

evoked by the Mystery of Golgotha, but still picturing the Christ of the Sun Mysteries.

Behind the scenes of world-history, sublime and wonderful events were taking place. From the West came pagan Christianity, the Arthur-Christianity, also under other names and in another form. From the East came the Christ in the hearts of men. And then the meeting takes place — the meeting between the Christ Who had Himself come down to earth and His Own Image which is brought to Him from West to East. This meeting took place in the year 869 A.D. Up to that year we have two streams, clearly distinct from one another. The one stream, more in the North, passed across Central Europe and bore the Christ as a Sun Hero, whether the name were Baldur or some other. And under the banner of Christ, the Sun Hero, the Knights of Arthur spread their culture abroad.

The other stream, rooted inwardly in the hearts of men, which later on became the Grail stream, is to be perceived more in the South, coming from the East. It bears the real Christ, Christ Himself. The other stream brings to meet it from the West a cosmic Image of the Christ. This meeting of Christ with Himself, of Christ the Brother of Humanity with Christ the Sun Hero Who is there only as it were in an Image — this meeting of

Christ with His own Image took place in the 9th century.

 Diagram 3

I have given you here, my dear friends, an idea of the inner happenings during the first centuries after the Mystery of Golgotha, when, as I have already said, the souls were living who are now again upon earth, and who have carried with them from their previous earthly lives the urge to come in sincerity into the Anthroposophical Movement. [See: *Karmic Relationships, Vol. III.*]

When we consider this significant Arthur stream from West to East, it appears to us as the stream which

brings the Impulse of the Sun into earthly civilisation. In this Arthur stream is working and weaving the Michael stream as we may call it in Christian terminology, the stream in the spiritual life of humanity in which we have been living since the end of the seventies of last century. The Ruling Power, known by the name of Gabriel, who had held sway for three or four centuries in European civilisation, was succeeded at the end of the seventies of last century by Michael. And the Rulership of Michael will last for three to four centuries, weaving and working in the spiritual life of mankind. And so we have good cause at the present time to speak of the Michael streams, for we ourselves are living once again in an Age of Michael.

We find one of these Michael streams if we look back to the period immediately preceding that of the Mystery of Golgotha, to the Arthur Impulse going out from the West, from England, an Impulse which was kindled originally by the Hibernian Mysteries. And we find a still more ancient form of this Michael stream if we look back to what happened centuries before the Mystery of Golgotha, when, taking its start from Northern Greece, in Macedonia, the international, cosmopolitan stream connected with the name of Alexander the Great arose under the influence of the

conception of the world that is known as the Aristotelian. What was achieved through Aristotle and Alexander in that pre-Christian age took place under the Rulership of Michael, just as now once again we are living under his Rulership. The Michael Impulse was there in the spiritual life at the time of Alexander the Great, just as it is there now, in our own time. Whenever a Michael Impulse is at work in humanity upon the earth it is always a time when that which has been founded in a centre of spiritual culture spreads abroad among many peoples of the earth and is carried into many regions, wherever it is possible to carry it.

This came to pass in pre-Christian times through the campaigns of Alexander. The achievements of Greek culture were spread among men wherever this became possible. If one had asked Alexander and Aristotle: Whence comes your impulse to spread abroad the spiritual culture of your age? — they would have spoken, though under a different name, of that same Being, Michael, who works from the Sun as the Servant of Christ. For among the Archangels who in turn rule over civilisation, Michael belongs to the Sun. Michael was Ruler in the time of Alexander and is Ruler again in our own time. The next Ruling Archangel was Oriphiel, who belongs to Saturn. His

successor, the Archangel Anael, belongs to Venus. While Zachariel, the Archangel who ruled civilisation in the 4th and 5th centuries, belongs to the sphere of Jupiter. Then came Raphael, from the Mercury sphere, at the time when a form of thought connected with medicine and healing lived in the background of European civilisation. After Raphael came Samael, whose Rulership extended a little beyond the 12th century. And then came the Age of Gabriel. Samael belongs to Mars, Gabriel to the Moon. And Gabriel was once again succeeded by Michael, who belongs to the Sun sphere, in the seventies of the 19th century. Thus in rhythmic succession these seven Beings of the Hierarchy of the Archangels rule over the spiritual life of the earth.

And so as we look back — when was the last Rulership of Michael? It was in the Alexander period. It prevailed during that period when Greek civilisation was carried across to Asia and Africa, and finally concentrated in the great and influential city of Alexandria with its mighty heroes of the spiritual life.

It is a strange vista that presents itself to occult sight. In the age which lies a few centuries before the Mystery of Golgotha, we see, going Eastwards from Macedonia — that is to say, once more from West to

East but this time farther to the East — we see the same stream which proceeds from the English and Irish souls in the West and which also flows from West to East. During the Alexander period, Michael was the Ruling Archangel on the earth. During the Arthur period, when Michael was working from the Sun, the influences I have described were sent down from the Sun. But what happened later on, after the Mystery of Golgotha had taken place? What happened to the kind of thought that had been carried by Alexander the Great over to Asia?

At the time when Charlemagne, in his own way, was establishing a certain form of Christian culture in Europe, Haroun al Raschid was living over yonder in Asia Minor. All the oriental wisdom and spirituality to be found at that time in architecture, in art, in science, in religion, in literature, in poetry — it was all gathered at the Court of Haroun al Raschid. And at his side there was a Counsellor, a man who was not initiated in all these arts and sciences at that time, but who had been an Initiate in earlier times, in a former life. Around these two men, Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor, we find that all the wisdom which had been carried by Alexander into Asia, all the teachings which had been drawn from the old nature-wisdom and were imparted by Aristotle to those he was able to

instruct — all this was changed. Alexandrianism and Aristotelianism were permeated and impregnated at the Court of Haroun al Raschid with Arabism, with Mohammedanism.

And then, all the learning thus permeated with Arabism was carried over into the stream of Christianity by way of Greece, but especially by way of Northern Africa, Italy and Spain. It was carried over, inculcated as it were into the world of Christendom.

But before this, Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor had passed through the gate of death, and from that life which leads from death to a new birth they looked down on what was taking place on earth in the expeditions of the Mohammedan Moors to Spain. From the spiritual world they watched the form of culture which they themselves had promoted and which had been spread by their successors. Haroun al Raschid concentrated his attention from the spiritual world more on the regions of Greece, Italy and Spain; his Counsellor more on the stream going out from the East across the regions to the North of the Black Sea, through Russia and into Central Europe.

And now the question arises: What was the destiny of Alexander and Aristotle themselves? They were

deeply bound up with the Rulership of Michael but they were not incarnated on the earth at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha.

We must try to get a clear conception of the two contrasting pictures. On the earth are those who were contemporaries of the Mystery of Golgotha. Christ comes down through the Mystery of Golgotha, becomes Man, and from then on lives in the earth-sphere. And what is happening on the Sun? On the Sun there are the souls who at that time belonged to Michael, who were living in his sphere. These souls witnessed, from the Sun, the departure of Christ from the Sun and His descent to earth. On the earth there were those who witnessed His arrival. That is the difference. The experience of those who were on earth during the Michael Rulership at the time of Alexander, was that they saw as it were the *other* direction of the Christ Event, namely, the departure of the Christ from the Sun. They live on — I will not now mention unimportant incarnations — and they experience, in the spiritual world, that significant point of time in the 9th century, about the year 869, when there took place the meeting of the Christ with His own Image, with His own Life-Spirit brought over from pagan, pre-Christian Christianity.

Another meeting also took place in the spiritual world, a meeting of the individualities living in Alexander the Great and in Aristotle with the individualities who had lived in Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor. The wisdom from Asia, in a Mohammedanised form, living in Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor after their death, came into contact, in the spiritual world, with Alexander and Aristotle. On the one side Aristotelianism and Alexandrianism, but impregnated with Mohammedanism, and on the other, the real Aristotle and the real Alexander — not a weakened form of their teachings. Alexander and Aristotle had witnessed the Mystery of Golgotha *from the Sun.*

Then a great spiritual exchange, a great heavenly Council, if one may call it so, took place in the spiritual world between Mohammedanised Aristotelianism and Christianised Aristotelianism which had, however, been imbued in the spiritual world with the Christian Impulse.

In the spiritual world which borders on our physical earth — it was here that Alexander and Aristotle met with Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor and consulted together as to the further progress of Christianity in Europe, with an eye to what should

come at the end of the 19th century and in the 20th century, when Michael would again have the Rulership on earth. This all took place in the light raying from that other event, namely, the meeting of Christ with His own Image. That heavenly Council was permeated by the influence of this meeting. And the lines, the threads of the spiritual life of humanity were projected with great intensity in the spiritual world which borders on the physical earth.

Below, on the earth itself, the Church Fathers gathered together in Constantinople at the Eighth Ecumenical Council, where they formulated the dogma that man does not consist of body, soul and Spirit, but only of body and soul, the soul possessing certain spiritual attributes. Trichotomy — the definition of man as body, soul and Spirit — was done away with and anyone who persisted in believing it was declared to be a heretic. The Christian Fathers in Europe never spoke of body, soul and Spirit, but only of body and soul.

The decisive event which took place in the year 869 in the super-sensible worlds as I have described it, cast its shadows down into the earthly world. The Dark Age, the Kali Yuga, received a special impetus, while

what I have just described was taking place above, in the spiritual world.

Such was the real course of events. In the physical world the Council of Constantinople which eliminated the Spirit, and in the world immediately bordering on the physical, a heavenly Council such as I have described — coinciding with the meeting of Christ Himself with His own Image.

But it was known that it was a question of waiting until the new Michael Age had dawned on earth. There were, none the less, always a few Teachers who knew, even though in a somewhat decadent way, something of what takes place behind the veils of existence. There were always Teachers who knew how to present, if not always in very apt pictures, the spiritual content of the world, who could speak of what was happening in the spiritual world that is so near to the earth. And here and there these Teachers found ears willing to listen to them. Their listeners were men who learned something of true Christianity by catching here and there fragmentary words as to what would come in the 20th century after the Michael Rulership had begun once again.

In you yourselves, my dear friends, are the souls who were in incarnation at that time and listened to those who spoke of the coming Age of Michael and whose speech was influenced by impulses coming down from the heavenly Council of which I have told you.

From these experiences of a previous life in the early Christian centuries — not precisely the 9th century but before and after, chiefly before — arose the subconscious urge, when the Michael Rulership should be there once more, from the end of the 19th century onwards, to look for centres where the spiritual life is again cultivated under the influence of Michael. This impulse was rooted in the souls of those who had once heard of the teachings, who knew something of the mysteries of which we have spoken to-day.

And so the karmic urge lives in souls to find their way to that form of Christianity which was to be spread by Anthroposophy under the influence of Michael at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. What these souls had experienced in earlier times expresses itself in this incarnation in the fact that certain of them find their way to the Anthroposophical Movement.

Knowledge resulting from a converging of old pre-Christian, cosmic Christianity with inward Christian doctrines, teachings which were connected with the spiritual workings of nature and yet also with the Mystery of Golgotha, continued to be taught on earth at the time when those souls who now in this later incarnation feel themselves drawn to Anthroposophy had passed through the gates of death and were living in the spiritual world between death and a new birth. Some of them indeed came down to incarnation on the earth. The ancient teachings, with their cosmic view of Christianity, lived on, propagating traditions of the Mysteries of antiquity. This knowledge lived on in Schools in Europe like that of Chartres in the 12th century, with its great Teachers — Bernardus Sylvestris, Alanus ab Insulis and others. And the teachings lived and worked too in the great teacher of Dante, Brunetto Latini, of whom I spoke to you in the last lecture. In this way we see how there is a continuation of the knowledge in which there was still connection between cosmic Christianity and the purely human, earthly Christianity which more and more gained the supremacy on earth.

The Council held in Constantinople was an earthly, shadow-image of something that took place in the spiritual world. A constant connection was maintained

between what was proceeding in the physical world and in the immediately adjacent spiritual world. And because of this, the most illustrious Teachers of Chartres felt themselves inspired by the true Alexander and the true Aristotle, although in a still stronger way by Plato and by the Platonic and Neo-Platonic thought which prevailed in the mysticism of the Middle Ages.

Something of great significance now took place. Those who had grouped themselves around Michael, and who had for the most part been incarnated at the time of Alexander, were now living in the spiritual world. Looking down from thence they saw how Christianity was evolving under the Teachers of Chartres. But they waited until these Teachers — who were the last who taught of Christianity in its cosmic aspect — they waited until these Teachers of Chartres had come up into the spiritual world. And at a certain point of time, at the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries, there gathered together in the spiritual sphere bordering on cur earth, the more definitely Platonic Teachers of Chartres and those who had in some way taken part in the heavenly Council in the year 869. There took place — if I may use trivial words of earth to describe such a sublime event — a kind of conference between the Teachers of Chartres

who had just ascended into the spiritual world and were now to continue their existence there, and those who were on the point of descending to earth, among them the individualities of Alexander and Aristotle, who immediately afterwards incarnated in the Dominican Order. And then, in a body of teaching that is so misunderstood to-day but the deep significance of which ought to be realised, in Scholasticism, preparation was made for all that was to come later on in the next Age of Michael.

And now, in order that they might enter right into the heart of Christianity, the souls who belonged to the sphere of Michael, who had lived in the old Alexander time, who had not lived on earth during the first Christian centuries, or at least only in unimportant incarnations — these souls now came into incarnation in order to imbibe Christianity in the Dominican or other Orders, but mainly in the Dominican Order. Again they passed through the gate of death and continued their existence in the spiritual world.

In the 15th century and lasting on into the 16th — and it must be remembered that time-relationships are quite different in the spiritual world — there took place in the super-sensible world the great process of

instruction instituted by Michael himself for those who belonged to him. A great super-sensible School was founded, a School in which Michael himself was the Teacher and in which those souls took part who had been inspired by the impulses of the Alexander Age and had later steeped themselves in Christianity in the manner described. All the discarnate souls who belonged to Michael took part in this great School in the super-sensible world during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. All the Beings of the Hierarchy of Angels, Archangels and Archai who belonged to the Michael stream, as well as many elementary beings, also took part in it.

In this super-sensible School, a wonderful review was given of the wisdom of the ancient Mysteries. Detailed knowledge in regard to the ancient Mysteries was imparted to the souls partaking in this School. They looked back to the Sun Mysteries, to the Mysteries of the other planets. But a vista of the future was given too, a vista of what should begin at the end of the 19th century in the new Age of Michael. All this passed through these souls who now, in the present Michael Age, feel drawn to the Anthroposophical Movement.

Meanwhile, on earth, the last bout of the struggle was taking place. Haroun al Raschid had incarnated again as Lord Bacon of Verulam and in this new incarnation had set the impulse of materialism on foot. The universality in the teachings of Bacon, but also his materialism, came from his incarnation as Haroun al Raschid. Bacon was the reincarnated Haroun al Raschid. The Counsellor, who had taken the other path, incarnated in the same epoch, as Amos Comenius.

And so while Christianity illumined by Aristotelian and Alexandrian thought was going through its most important phase of development in the super-sensible worlds during the 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th centuries — during this very same period we find materialism being established on earth in the minds of men, established in science by Bacon, the reincarnated Haroun al Raschid, and in the realm of education by Amos Comenius, the reincarnated Counsellor of Haroun al Raschid. The two souls worked together.

When Amos Comenius and Bacon had once again passed through the gate of death, a remarkable thing came to pass in the spiritual world. After Bacon had passed through the gate of death, it happened that because of the particular mode of thinking he had

adopted in his incarnation as Bacon, a whole world of “idols,” demonic idols, went forth from his etheric body, and spread themselves out in the spiritual world which was peopled by those who were the pupils of Michael.

As I have shown in my first Mystery Play, things that happen on earth work powerfully into the spiritual world. Bacon’s mode of thinking on the earth worked so shatteringly into the spiritual world that it was flooded by a whole host of “idols.”

And the materialistic form of educational science inaugurated by Amos Comenius provided the sphere, the cosmic atmosphere, as it were, for the idols of Bacon. Bacon provided the idols; and just as we human beings have around us the mineral and plant kingdoms, so these idols of Bacon were surrounded by other kingdoms which were necessary to their existence. And these were provided by what Amos Comenius had instituted on earth.

The individualities who had once lived on the earth as Alexander and Aristotle set themselves to fight these demonic idols. And the conflict continued until the time when the French Revolution broke out on the earth.

The idols, the demonic idols which it had not been possible to overcome, which had as it were escaped from the fight, descended to earth and became the inspiring forces of the materialism of the 19th century with its many consequences. These forces are the inspirers of the materialism of the 19th century.

The souls who had remained behind, who with the assistance of the individualities of Aristotle and Alexander had profited by the teaching of Michael, came back to earth, bearing the impulses I have described, towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. And many of these souls can be recognised in those who come to the Anthroposophical Movement. Such is the karma of those who come to the Movement with inner sincerity.

It is a shattering experience to hear of what is happening immediately behind the events in the outer world at the present time. But it is something which, under the impulse of the Christmas Foundation at the Goetheanum must be implanted in the hearts and souls of those who call themselves Anthroposophists. It must live in their hearts and souls, and it will give them the strength to work on, for those who are Anthroposophists to-day in the true sense will feel a strong urge to come down again to the earth very

soon. And with a faculty of prophecy connected with the Michael Impulse, it can be foreseen that many anthroposophical souls will come again to the earth at the end of the 20th century in order to bring to full realisation the Anthroposophical Movement which must now be established on a firm and sure foundation.

Every Anthroposophist should be moved by this knowledge: “I have in me the impulse of Anthroposophy. I recognise it as the Michael Impulse. I wait and am strengthened in my waiting by true activity in Anthroposophy at the present time in order that after the short interval allotted in the 20th century to anthroposophical souls between death and a new birth, I may come again at the end of the century to promote the Movement with much more spiritual power. I am preparing for the new Age leading from the 20th into the 21st century” … It is thus that a true Anthroposophist speaks. Many forces of destruction are at work upon the earth! All culture, all civilised life must fall into decadence if the spirituality of the Michael Impulse does not so lay hold of men that they are capable of bringing upliftment to the civilisation that is hurrying downhill.

If there are to be found truly anthroposophical souls, willing to bring this spirituality into earthly life, then there will be a movement leading upwards. If such souls are *not* found, decadence will continue to spread. The great War, with all its attendant evils, will be merely the beginning of still worse evils.

Human beings to-day are facing a great crisis. Either they must see civilisation going down into the abyss, or they must raise it by spirituality and promote it in the sense of the Michael Impulse.

That, my dear friends, is what I had to say to you on this occasion and my desire is that it shall work on and bear fruit in your souls. For as I have often said at the conclusion of a happy and satisfying visit, when we have worked together for a time, we know, as Anthroposophists, that it is our karma to have been able to do so. We know too that we still remain united, even when divided in physical space. We shall remain united in the signs that can reveal themselves to the eyes of spirit and to the ears of soul if what I have said in these lectures has been received in full earnestness and has been understood.

Cosmic Christianity: Lecture I

For centuries now men have become less and less accustomed to turn their minds to the spiritual world. We say, and rightly say, that the last few centuries have inaugurated an age of materialism which has set its stamp not only upon man's thinking but also upon his will, his actions, indeed upon his whole life. And we in the Anthroposophical Society realise that the purpose of this Society is to awaken forces whereby men will be released from their bondage to matter, from influences which make them deny the reality of the Spiritual.

But if the Anthroposophical Movement is to provide the impulse that is needed in the evolution of humanity, all the teachings, all the treasures of wisdom which have for many years been flowing through it must be applied with real earnestness. We must ponder deeply on the realities of man's life to-day. He comes into the world through birth with traits inherited from parents and ancestors, he is influenced and guided by current views and opinions and at a certain age he becomes alert and awake to the life that surrounds him in the outer world. He pays attention to the ideas, the thoughts, the deeds, the

impulses to be found in his environment; he tries to understand his place as a member of a particular nation, as a member of humanity in general, and so forth.

In the Anthroposophical Movement we accept the enlightening truth that all of us who are present here have passed through earlier lives on the earth. We have carried into this present life the fruits of those earlier lives. And we are mindful not only of what we are within our present nation, within modern humanity, but we realise that we have already passed through a number of incarnations on the earth and that in other conditions of existence between death and rebirth we have so worked at the development of the Self, the Ego, that we have made ourselves what we are to-day.

But in his everyday consciousness man does not realise that these previous earthly lives must also be taken into account. Nor will any progress be possible unless he studies the whole of life in the light of karma, of destiny taking shape from one earthly life to another. The historical life of humanity must, above all, be studied from this point of view. We say to ourselves that here or there an outstanding personality appeared, one who accomplished great

things for mankind. Do we really understand such a personality if we merely consider that he was born at a certain time and then follow the experiences and events of that single life? If the teachings available in the Anthroposophical Movement are taken seriously, our attitude must rather be this: There we see a personality who in his incarnation now or in the past, represents the fruits of earlier earthly lives, and we cannot really understand him without taking those earlier lives into account.

If this point of view is seriously adopted, however, our conception of history will be radically different from that prevailing to-day. It is customary nowadays to recount the facts and events of the various epochs of human history — in connection, let us say, with a statesman, a painter or some other outstanding figure. Accounts are given of his life and deeds on earth, but the idea that earlier earthly lives play over into a given incarnation is never seriously considered. Yet there can be no real understanding of history without the knowledge that what happens in a later time is the fruit carried over by the human being himself from earlier into later epochs. The human beings who are living to-day or who lived centuries ago were also on the earth in past ages and have carried over into this

later epoch the results of what they thought and experienced in those bygones times.

How, for example, are we to understand a phenomenon of the present age as disturbing as the following? — For well nigh two thousand years, all that was inaugurated through the Mystery of Golgotha has been with us; ever since then the Christ Impulse has been working in European and Western civilisation. But in the very same world through which the Christ Impulse has passed, warming the hearts and enlightening the minds of men, a different element has taken root. In that same world are to be found the results of all that is inculcated even into our children through the introduction of modern science into the schools, all the ideas and views presented to us by the newspapers every morning at breakfast. Then again, think of the prevailing conceptions of the nature and being of man, think of all that science has introduced into public life, all that art and other branches of culture have produced .. . it cannot be said that these things are permeated by the Christ Impulse. They are there side-by-side with the Christ Impulse. Indeed many men are at pains to prevent the influence of the Christ Impulse finding its way into the domains of anatomy, physiology, biology or history, and to keep all such fields of knowledge separate and apart.

Why is it so? As long as we merely speak of some personality who was, let us say, a scientist, who received this or that kind of education, who engaged in some form of research, or again, if we merely speak of a statesman as having been a Liberal or a Conservative, we shall not understand how the Christ Impulse can flow through modern civilisation simultaneously with elements that need have nothing whatever in common with Christianity. How can this be? We shall, however, be able to understand if we study the different earthly lives of outstanding personalities, for we shall realise then that human beings carry over into later epochs the thoughts, the impulses of will they unfolded in their earlier incarnations.

We observe personalities in history who have had great influence upon our own epoch. Think, for example, of one whose influence upon external life, especially in domains where science plays a part, has been deep and far-reaching — I am referring to Bacon, Lord Bacon of Verulam. He appears in the world and details of his life are well known. We see him working in the sphere of Christian civilisation. Yet there is no trace whatever of the Christian Impulse in his writings. Bacon of Verulam might equally have arisen from some non-Christian civilisation. What he actually says

about Christianity is extremely superficial compared with the real impulse that was within him. The same characteristic is to be perceived in Bacon the scientist, Bacon the philosopher, Bacon the statesman.

Again, think of a personality like Darwin. Darwin was a good and sincere Christian, but there was no connection whatever between his Christianity and his ideas about the evolution of animals and man. The trend of thought in both cases is altogether different from that of the Christian Impulse.

We shall make no headway unless we ask ourselves: What can there have been in the earlier earthly lives, let us say of Bacon, or of Darwin? What had they carried over from their earlier incarnations?

If the Anthroposophical Society is to fulfil its purpose, such questions must no longer remain abstract. The mere knowledge that man lives many times on the earth, that one thing or another is carried over from an earlier into a later life will not lead us far. There is of course nothing against reflections of this kind; they amount to no more than a general belief and are innocuous. But what we must do is to study the concrete realities of man’s being and understand

his life in some later epoch in the light of what he was in earlier incarnations.

We shall now proceed to study these matters, beginning with an example taken from history, in order to tackle the subject of karma in all earnestness. Observing the progress of evolution revealed by civilisation, by the deeds of humanity, we shall be able to perceive how individuals carry over into a later epoch what they acquired and made their own in an earlier one.

For example: Bacon of Verulam appears in a certain age; Darwin appears in a later epoch. We discern a certain similarity between them. Superficial study merely sets out to discover how Bacon, how Darwin, evolved their particular views and ideas. But if we go more deeply into the matter we find that both of them introduce into Christian civilisation an element which, to begin with, is altogether inexplicable as a product of that civilisation.

As we look back, the question arises: Had not Bacon and Darwin passed through earlier lives on earth? They carried over from those earlier incarnations the traits and characteristics revealed in their later lives. When we understand them as *individuals,* then and

only then do we understand their real place in history. For when the reality of karma is taken seriously, history resolves itself into deeds of men, into streams of human lives flowing from remote ages of the past into the present and thence into the future.

From now onwards these things will be spoken of without reserve; we shall speak of facts of the spiritual life in such a way that external history and the external world of nature will themselves reveal to us the spiritual realities lying behind.

It is certain that these questions, bearing as they do upon the spiritual and physical worlds alike, will, to begin with, be taken less seriously than is their due. For judgments about such matters cannot be formed as judgments are formed about the things of ordinary life. And in order to indicate the many underlying factors which have to be taken into consideration, I should like to make a certain personal reference — although it is meant to be quite objective — before we come to answer the questions: Who was Bacon in his previous life? Who was Darwin in his previous life? [Dr. Steiner did not speak further of Darwin in these lectures. Readers are referred to his lecture in Dornach, 16th March, 1924. *Karmic Relationships,* Vol. I.]

In the *Goetheanum Weekly*, as you know, I am writing the story of my life. But in a periodical intended for the outside world as well, it is not possible to speak of everything and certain additions must be made for the sake of those within our Movement who earnestly desire to find their way into the spiritual world. And so to-day, before I proceed in the next lectures to answer such questions as have here been raised, I should like to make this brief personal reference.

Those who like myself were born in the sixties of last century have lived through the epoch when the Gabriel Rulership of the preceding three and a half centuries was superseded by the Michael Rulership. The Michael Rulership, that is to say the entry of the Sun-Impulse belonging to Michael into the civilisation of humanity, began at the end of the seventies of last century. In the time immediately after the entry of the Michael influence, in the eighties and nineties, when the Michael Rulership was beginning to take effect behind the scenes of external happenings, those who were passing through the period of the development of the Intellectual or Mind Soul — that is to say between the ages of twenty-eight and thirty-five — were really living in a kind of aloofness from the physical world. For when a human being is consciously

active and alert in the Mind Soul he is aloof in a very real sense from the material world.

We speak of man as a being composed of physical body, etheric body, sentient body. With his physical body he stands clearly within the physical world. With his etheric body, sentient body and sentient soul too, he is strongly involved in the external world. But he can live aloof and apart from the external, material world when he is fully conscious in the Mind Soul, before the Consciousness or Spiritual Soul awakens in the thirty-fifth year of life. Full consciousness within the Mind Soul can transport a man altogether into the world of soul. And so in the eighties and nineties of last century there was opportunity for those possessed of the corresponding faculties to live in the Mind Soul, aloof to a greater or less extent from the physical world.

What does this mean? It means that in the Mind Soul, aloof from the material world, one was able to live in the very world into which Michael was entering on his way down towards the earth. The eighties and nineties produced many things that evoked wonder and admiration, there were many fields in which men became expert and many ways by which culture was enriched. Modern literature has words of high praise

for this period. Think only of what was achieved by newspapers and in the world of art from the years 1879, 1880–1890 onwards. But in these very years there were happenings of an altogether different character. — Behind a thin veil, a very thin veil at that time, was a world adjoining our physical world. Peculiar conditions prevailed shortly before the close of Kali Yuga at the end of the 19th century. In a neighbouring world, separated from the physical world by a veil so thin that it was impenetrable only to the everyday consciousness of men, things were taking place which must come to clearer and clearer evidence in the physical world and their influences brought to effect.

In very truth something mysterious was at work in the closing decades of the 19th century. There were momentous happenings, grouped around the Spirit we name Michael. Participating in these happenings were strong and forceful followers of Michael, human souls living at that time in their existence between death and rebirth, not yet incarnate in the physical body; but there were also mighty demonic Powers who under the sway of Ahrimanic influences set themselves in rebellion against what was thus to come into the world.

If I may now be allowed to make a personal reference, it is this: Conceptions of the reality of the spiritual world presented no difficulty to me at any age. What the spiritual world revealed penetrated into my soul, formed itself into ideas, into thoughts. On the other hand, things that came easily to others were difficult for me. I was always able quickly to grasp the arguments of natural scientific thinking, but concrete facts would not remain in my memory, simply would not register there. I could without effort understand the wave-theory, the arguments of the mathematicians, physicists and chemists; on the other hand, unlike most others, I could not recognise a particular mineral if I had seen it only once or twice; I was obliged to look at it perhaps thirty or forty times before I could recognise it again. I found it difficult to retain concrete pictures of the things of the external, material world. It was not easy for me to come fully into the physical world of sense.

For this reason I lived with all the forces of the Mind Soul through what was taking place in this world behind the veil, in this sphere of Michael’s activity. And it was there that the great challenge arose once and for all to deal earnestly with the reality of the spiritual world, to bring these momentous questions to the light of day. External life offered no incentive, for

all that was done there was to hash up once again the old, well-worn biographies of men like Darwin and Bacon. But there behind the scenes, behind this thin veil, in the region where Michael was at work, the great questions were brought to an issue. And this above all was borne in upon one: What a vast difference there is between asking these questions inwardly and putting them into actual words!

At the present time people think that once something is known it can immediately be spoken about. Indeed everything that enters people's ken to-day is at once put into words and announced. But when the questions at issue in Michael's sphere in the eighties and nineties took hold of a man, they worked on into the 20th century. And even after having lived with these questions for decades, every time one wanted to utter them, it was as though the opponents of Michael gathered round and sealed one's lips — for about certain matters silence was to be maintained.

Much that remained a Michael secret had therefore to be carried onward in the heart of the Anthroposophical Movement itself — above all the truths relating to historical connections of the kind to which reference has been made. But for a certain time now — actually for months — it has been possible for

me to speak of these things without reserve. That is why I have been able to speak freely of the connections between earthly lives, and shall also do so here. For this is part of the unveiling of those Michael Mysteries which took the course I have described to you.

This is one of the subjects which, up till now, has been dealt with in a more abstract way. At the beginning of the lecture I spoke of an eventuality, namely that the spiritual world might have withheld consent. It has not been so. What has actually happened is that since the Christmas Foundation Meeting and above all because of the opportunities vouchsafed to me for occult work, the demons who hitherto prevented these things from being voiced have been compelled to remain silent. The things to which I refer are not, of course, entirely *new,* for they were experienced a long time ago in the way I have indicated to you. But it must be remembered that in occultism things that are discovered one day cannot be communicated the next.

I have now spoken of a certain change in circumstances and am telling you these things in order that when, in the future, reference is made to concrete realities in the repeated earthly lives of

conspicuous or inconspicuous personalities, you may understand them with the necessary earnestness. Such things must not be lightly taken but with the respect that is their due.

In the forthcoming lectures such indications will be multiplied and elaborated. But before speaking about earlier incarnations of men like Darwin and others I wanted first to emphasise by what kind of spiritual atmosphere these things must be pervaded and the nature of the enlightenment that needs to be shed upon them.

Cosmic Christianity: Lecture II

I have raised the question: How can we find in earlier earthly lives the explanation of a later incarnation, in the case not only of historical personages but also in that of many a personality unnoticed by history whose influence nevertheless arouses our interest? And to-day, as a foundation for further studies, I shall indicate connections in the incarnations of certain individuals. What I shall put before you is the outcome of a particular kind of spiritual investigation, and with this foundation — which will be given in narrative form to-day — we shall begin to understand how the successive earthly lives of individuals can be discovered.

We will take characteristic personalities whose names I gave as examples in the last lecture. Such personalities make us alive to the fact that spiritual impulses of very different kinds are working in our present civilisation. For well nigh two thousand years Christianity has been spreading in the West and in many colonial territories, influencing civilisation to a greater extent than is imagined. It is true, of course, that really close study may reveal the working of the Christ Impulse in many things where there is at first no

evidence of it. But for all that, it cannot be denied that there are elements in our civilisation which seem to have no connection whatever with Christianity. Certain views and customs of life which seem to be utterly at variance with Christianity take root in our civilisation.

The attention of one who calls super-sensible research to his aid in order to discover the deeper reasons for the course taken by the spiritual life of mankind, is drawn to a phenomenon insufficiently studied in connection with the growth of Western civilisation. His attention is drawn to the work of an institution which flourished in the East in the days of Charlemagne in the West. I am referring to that Court in the East whose ruler, surrounded by oriental splendour and magnificence, was Haroun al Raschid, the contemporary of Charlemagne whose achievements in the West fade into insignificance as compared with the brilliance of what was going forth, at the very same time, from the Court of Haroun al Raschid.

All branches of spiritual life had been brought together at this Court in Western Asia. It must be remembered that through the expeditions of Alexander, Greek culture had been carried over to Asia in a form of which only a faint inkling remains to-day.

The finest fruits of Greek culture had found their way to Asia, brought thither by the genius of Alexander the Great. And as a result, many centres of learning in the East had adopted conceptions of the world which faithfully preserved the old, while rejecting many elements that in the West were threatening to submerge the old.

Through the expeditions of Alexander the Great, a certain rational and healthy form of mysticism had been carried over to Asia, with the result that men who were more adapted for the kind of philosophical thinking thus introduced, regarded the world as pervaded by the Cosmic Intelligence. Over in Asia in those times a man did not say: “I think this or that out for myself, I have my own, personal intelligence” — but he said: “Everything that is thought is thought by Gods, primarily by the supreme Godhead — the Godhead as conceived by Aristotelianism.” The intelligence in a human being was a drop of the Universal Intelligence manifesting in the individual, so that in head and heart man felt himself to be an integral part of the Universal Intelligence.

Such was the mood-of-soul in those times and it prevailed, still, at the Court of Haroun al Raschid in the 8th and 9th centuries after the founding of

Christianity. Nor must it be forgotten that many learned sages had taken refuge in Asia when the Schools of Greek philosophy were exterminated in Europe. Astronomy with a strongly mystical trend, architecture and other forms of art revealing truly creative power, poetry, sciences, directives for practical life — all these things flourished at the Court of Haroun al Raschid. He was a splendour-loving but at the same time a highly gifted organiser and he gathered at his Court the most learned men of his day, men who although they were no longer working as Initiates, still preserved and cultivated in a living way much of the ancient wisdom of the Mysteries.

We will consider more closely one such personality. He was a very wise Counsellor of Haroun al Raschid. His name is of no consequence and has not come down to posterity, but he was a man of great wisdom and in order to understand him we must pay attention to something that may surprise even those who are to some extent conversant with Spiritual Science.

There is a question which may occur to all of you. You may say: Anthroposophy tells us that there were once Initiates, living here or there, possessing far-reaching knowledge and profound wisdom. But since men live again in new earthly lives, why is it that to-

day, for example, we do not recognise reincarnated sages of old? This would be an entirely reasonable question.

But one who is aware of the conditions by which earthly life is determined, knows that an individuality whose karma leads him from pre-earthly existence to birth in a particular epoch, must accept the educational facilities which that epoch affords. And so it may well be that although some individual was an Initiate in bygone times, the knowledge he possessed as an Initiate remains in the subconscious realm of the soul; his day-consciousness gives indications of powers of some significance but does not directly reveal what was once in his soul in an earlier incarnation as an Initiate.

This is true of that wise Counsellor of Haroun al Raschid. In very ancient Mysteries he had been an Initiate. He had reincarnated and he lived as a reincarnated Initiate at the Court of Haroun al Raschid; the fruits of his earlier Initiation revealed themselves in a genius for organisation and he was able to administer in a truly masterly way the work of the other learned men at that Court. But he did not make the direct impression of an Initiate. Through his own being and qualities, not merely through the fact of

earlier Initiation, he preserved the ancient Initiation-Science — but as I said, he did not actually give the impression of having attained Initiation.

Haroun al Raschid held this wise man in high esteem, entrusting him with the organisation of all the sciences and arts flourishing at the Court. Haroun al Raschid was happy to have this man at his side, feeling tied to him by a deep and sincere friendship.

We will now turn our attention to these two individuals, Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor — remembering that in the 8th and 9th centuries at the Court of Charlemagne in Europe, men of the highest social rank (including Charlemagne himself) were only just beginning to make their first attempts at writing; at the same Court, Eginhart was endeavouring to formulate the early rudiments of grammar. In days when everything in Europe was extremely primitive, over in Asia much brilliant spiritual culture was personified in Haroun al Raschid whom Charlemagne held in great veneration. But this was a kind of culture which knew nothing of Christ nor wished to have anything to do with Christianity; it preserved and cultivated the best elements of Arabism and also kept alive ancient forms of Aristotelian thought — those forms which had not made their way

to Europe, for it was chiefly Aristotelian logic and dialectic which had spread so widely in the West and were the principles upon which the work of the Church Fathers and later on that of the Schoolmen was based.

As a result of the achievements of Alexander the Great, it was the more mystical and scientific knowledge imparted by Aristotle that had been cultivated in Asia where it had all come under the influence of the tremendously powerful intelligence of Arabism — which was, however, held to be a revealed, an inspired intelligence.

The existence of Christianity was known to the learned men at the Court of Haroun al Raschid but they regarded it as primitive and elementary in comparison with their own intellectual achievements.

We will now follow the subsequent destinies of these two personalities; Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor. Having worked in the way I have described, they bore with them through the gate of death the impulse to ensure that the kind of thinking, the world-conception cultivated at this Court, should spread in the world.

Let us consider soberly and in all earnestness, what then ensued. Two individualities start out from Asia:

the wise Counsellor and his overlord, Haroun al Raschid. For a time after death they remained together. It was to Alexandrianism, to Aristotelianism, that they owed the knowledge they had acquired. But they also absorbed all that in later times had been done to re-cast, to re-model these teachings. Unless it is possible to grasp what is happening in the spiritual world while the events of the physical world take their course on the earth below, we can understand only a tiny fraction of the world.

History gives a picture of what transpired after the epoch of Charlemagne and Haroun al Raschid. But while all that history relates about Asia and Europe was proceeding in the 8th and 9th centuries and on into the late Middle Ages, other most significant happenings were taking place in the spiritual world above. It must not be forgotten that while the physical life below and the spiritual life above flow on, influences from souls passing through their existence between death and rebirth stream down perpetually upon earthly life. Therefore we do right to attach importance to what the discarnate souls yonder in the spiritual world are experiencing and how they are acting in any particular epoch. Human life, above all in its course through history, can never be really comprehensible unless we turn our attention to what

is happening behind the scenes of external history, in the spiritual world.

Now it must be remembered that the impressions which men carry with them through the gate of death often differ in a very marked degree from the impressions people have of them during earthly life. And those who cannot throw off preconceptions when they are observing the spiritual life may find it difficult to recognise some particular individuality who in his existence after death is revealed to the eye of the seer. Nevertheless there are means whereby one can learn to perceive phases of spiritual life other than the one immediately following earthly existence. I have spoken of this in the Lecture-Course that is being given here [*True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation*. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1969.] and I shall have still more to say about the later phases of the life stretching from death to a new birth. We shall then understand more clearly the nature of the paths which enable us to make contact with the so-called Dead.

It is by these same paths that we are able to follow the further destinies of individuals such as Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor. In order to understand later developments in European civilisation it is of the greatest importance to take

account of these two individuals, above all of the bond between them in their thought and principles of action. Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor also bore with them through the gate of death a deep and strong affinity with the individualities of Alexander and Aristotle — who had, of course, preceded them in earthly existence by many centuries — and an intense longing to come into direct contact with them again. Moreover a meeting actually took place, with consequences of far-reaching significance.

For a while, Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor journeyed onwards together in the super-sensible world, looking down from thence upon happenings in the civilised world further to the West, in Greece, in certain regions North of the Black Sea, and so forth. They looked down upon it all and among the events upon which their gaze fell was one of which much has been said in anthroposophical lectures, namely the 8th General Ecumenical Council at Constantinople in the year 869 A.D.

The effect of this 8th Ecumenical Council upon the development of Western civilisation was incisive and profound, for Trichotomy, the definition of man as body, soul and Spirit, was then declared heretical. It was decreed that true Christians must speak of man as

a twofold being, consisting of body and soul only, the soul possessing certain spiritual qualities and forces. The reason why so little inclination to spirituality is to be discerned in Christian civilisation is that acknowledgment of the Spirit was declared heretical by the 8th Ecumenical Council in the year 869.

It was a momentous event, the effects of which have been far too little heeded. The Spirit was done away with: man was to be regarded as consisting only of body and soul. But the shattering experience for one who can observe the spiritual life and above all for one who truly participates in it is that precisely when here on earth in the year 869 A.D. the Spirit was done away with, there took place in the spiritual world above the meeting between the souls of Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor and the souls of Alexander the Great and Aristotle.

In thinking about what follows, you must accustom yourselves to the fact that super-sensible happenings will now be spoken of in Anthroposophy as naturally as we speak of happenings in the physical world. The lives of Alexander the Great and of Aristotle in those particular incarnations marked the culmination of a certain epoch. The impulse which had been given by ancient cultures and had come to expression in

Greece was formulated by Aristotle into concepts which in the form of ideas dominated the West and human civilisation in general for long ages of time.

Alexander the Great, the pupil and friend of Aristotle, had with stupendous forcefulness spread the impulses given by Aristotle over wide areas of the then known world. This impulse was still working in Asia in the days of Haroun al Raschid. It had long possessed a centre of brilliant and illustrious learning in Alexandria but at the same time, working through many hidden channels, it had a profound effect upon the whole of oriental culture.

All this had reached a certain culmination. The impulses of ancient spirituality in their manifold forms had converged in Alexandrianism and Aristotelianism. Christianity was born. The Mystery of Golgotha took place — in an age when the individualities of Alexander and Aristotle were not incarnated on the earth but were in the spiritual world, in intimate communion with what we call the dominion of Michael whose earthly rule had also come to its close, for Oriphiel had then succeeded Michael as the ruling Time-Spirit. Centuries had passed since the Mystery of Golgotha. What Alexander and Aristotle had established on earth, the aims to which they had

dedicated all their powers, the one in the field of thought, the other giving effect to a great genius for rulership — all this had been at work on the earth below. And from the spiritual world these two souls beheld it flowing on through the centuries, during one of which the Mystery of Golgotha had taken place. They turned their gaze upon all that was being done to spread a knowledge of the Mystery of Golgotha. They saw their work spreading abroad on the earth beneath, spreading too through the activities of individuals like Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor.

But in the souls of Alexander and Aristotle themselves there was an urge for something completely new, for a new beginning — not a mere continuation of what was already on the earth, but veritably a new beginning. In a certain respect, of course, there would be continuation, for it was not a question of sweeping away the old. But a new and mighty impulse whereby a particular form of Christianity would be instilled into earthly civilisation — it was to the inauguration of this impulse that Alexander and Aristotle dedicated themselves.

When their karma led them down again to incarnation on the earth (— it was before the meeting had taken place with Haroun al Raschid and his

Counsellor —) they lived, unknown and unheeded, in a corner of Europe not without importance for Anthroposophy, dying at an early age, but gazing for a brief moment as it were through a window into the civilisation of the West, receiving impressions and impulses but giving none of any significance themselves. That was to come later.

They had returned again into the spiritual world and were in the spiritual world when in the year 869 the 8th Ecumenical Council was held at Constantinople. It was then that the meeting took place in the spiritual world between Aristotle and Alexander on the one side and Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor on the other. It was an exchange of thought and ideas in the super-sensible world, of immense, far-reaching significance. We must realise that exchanges or conferences of this nature in the super-sensible world are of infinitely greater moment than mere discussions in words. When people on the earth sit together in discussion, when words shoot hither and thither without having much effect one way or the other, this is not even a shadowy image of what transpires when great decisions affecting the spiritual life as well, are taken in super-sensible worlds.

Alexander and Aristotle affirmed at that time that what had been established in earlier days must now be guided undeviatingly into the dominion of Michael. For it was known that Michael would again assume his Regency in the 19th century.

At this point we must understand one another. As the evolution of mankind flows onwards, one of the Archangels becomes Regent and exercises earthly rule for a period of three to three-and-a-half centuries. At the time when Aristotelianism was carried by Alexander the Great to Asia and Africa, at the time when the spread of this culture was pervaded by a cosmopolitan, international spirit, Michael was the Ruling Archangel; the spiritual life was under his dominion. The Regency of Michael was followed by that of Oriphiel. Then, until the 14th century A.D., there follow the Rulerships of Anael, Zachariel, Raphael, Samael — each lasting for three to four centuries. Gabriel is Regent from the 15th until the last third of the 19th century, when Michael again assumes dominion. Seven Archangels follow one another. Thus the earthly Rulerships of six other Archangels follow that of Michael, which was in force at the time of Alexander, and Michael assumes dominion again at the end of the 19th century. We ourselves, do we but rightly understand the spiritual

life, live under the direct influence of the Michael Rulership.

And so in the century when the meeting with Haroun al Raschid took place, Alexander and Aristotle turned their gaze to the earlier Rulership of Michael under which their work had been carried forward, they turned their gaze to the Mystery of Golgotha which as members of the Michael-community they had experienced from the sphere of the Sun, not from the earth — for at that time Michael's rule on earth was over. Michael and his own, among them Alexander and Aristotle, did not experience the Mystery of Golgotha from the vantage-point of the earth; they did not witness the arrival of Christ on the earth, they witnessed His departure from the Sun. But all that they experienced formed itself into the impulse which remained alive in them — the impulse to ensure that the new Michael Rulership, to which with every fibre of their souls Alexander and Aristotle had pledged their troth, would bring a Christianity not only firmly established but more inward, more profound. The new dominion of Michael was to begin in the year 1879 and last for three to four centuries. This is our own epoch and it behoves Anthroposophists to understand what it means to be living under the Michael Rulership.

Neither Haroun al Raschid nor his Counsellor were willing to accept this — the Counsellor with less emphasis, but fundamentally it was so in his case too. They desired, first and foremost, that the world should be dominated by the impulse that had taken such firm root in Mohammedanism. The participants in this spiritual struggle in the 9th century A.D. confronted each other in resolute, intense opposition — Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor on the one side and, on the other, the individualities who had lived as Aristotle and Alexander.

The aftermaths of this spiritual struggle worked on in the civilisation of Europe, are indeed working to this day. For what happens in the spiritual world above works down upon and into the affairs of the earth. And the very opposition with which Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor confronted Aristotle and Alexander at that time added strength to the impulse, so that from this meeting two streams went forth — one taking its course in Arabism and one whereby, through the impulses of the Michael Rulership, Aristotelianism was to be led over into Christianity.

After this encounter in the super-sensible world, Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor continued along a path leading towards the West, watching and

observing what was happening below on the earth. From this super-sensible existence, the one (he who had lived as Haroun al Raschid) concerned himself deeply with civilisation in Northern Africa, in Southern. Europe, in Spain, in France. During approximately the same period, the other (he who had been the wise Counsellor) concerned himself with the happenings of the spiritual life more towards the East, in the neighbourhood of the Black Sea, and thence through Europe as far as Holland and even England. And at roughly the same time, both were born again in European civilisation.

Now there need not necessarily be external similarity between such reincarnations. It is as a rule quite erroneous to believe that a man who has in him a particular kind of spirituality will be born again with that same spirituality. We must look more deeply into the roots of the human soul if we are to speak truly about repeated earthly lives. So, for example, we may take the famous Pope Gregory VII, the former Abbot Hildebrand — a Pope who worked fervidly for the cause of Catholicism and to whom is due much of the power wielded by the Papacy in the Middle Ages. He was born again in the 19th century as Ernst Haeckel, a bitter opponent of the Papacy. Haeckel is the reborn Abbot Hildebrand, Gregory VII, Gregory the Great. In

giving this example my only object is to show that it is the inner, deep-rooted impulses of the soul and not external similarity of thought and outlook that are carried over from one earthly life into another.

And so while the Arabians were still surging across Africa into Spain, it was the natural tendency of Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor to watch and exercise a protective influence over these campaigns. Outwardly, of course, the spread of Mohammedanism was checked, but its inner characteristics and trends were carried through the spiritual life by both these individualities on their journey between death and rebirth — carried over from the past into the future.

Haroun al Raschid was born again as Bacon of Verulam. His wise Counsellor too was born again, almost at the same time, as Amos Comenius, the educational reformer.

Think of what was brought into the world through Bacon of Verulam who was only outwardly a Christian and who introduced the abstract trend of Arabism into European science; and then think of what Amos Comenius instilled into education — his advocacy of material, concrete realism, his principles of the form in which all teaching matter should be imparted. It is a

trend that has no direct connection with Christianity. Although Amos Comenius worked among the Moravian Brothers, what he actually brought into being is to be explained by the fact that in a previous incarnation he stood in the same relationship to the development of the spiritual life of mankind as did the culture flourishing at the Court of Haroun al Raschid.

Think of every line of Bacon's writings, of what lies inherent in the sense-realism, as it is called, of Amos Comenius — it is all a riddle, perplexing, inexplicable. Lord Bacon is a violent opponent of Aristotelianism. His passionate antagonism is so clearly in evidence that one can perceive how deeply this impulse is rooted in his soul. The spiritual investigator who is able to discern and penetrate these things, not only studies Bacon of Verulam and Amos Comenius but also follows their life in the super-sensible world between death and rebirth. In the writings of Bacon of Verulam and Amos Comenius, in the very tone of their writings, in everything about them there is evidence of rebellion against Aristotelianism. How is this to be explained?

The following must be remembered. When Bacon and Amos Comenius returned to earthly life, Alexander and Aristotle had already again been in incarnation

during the Middle Ages, at a time when they, for their part, had accomplished- what it was then possible to accomplish for Aristotelianism, moreover when Aristotelianism itself was present in a form very different from that in which it had been cultivated by Haroun al Raschid — who, as I said, is the same individuality as Bacon of Verulam.

Picture to yourselves the whole situation. Think of the meeting — if I may express it so — in the year 869 A.D. and of how under this influence there had taken shape in Haroun al Raschid impulses of soul which now encountered something that had already been partially accomplished on the earth — for Alexander and Aristotle had already been in incarnation and their lives as men on earth in the pre-Christian era had played no part in giving effect to their aim. Realising this, you will understand the nature of the impulses resulting from that meeting in the spiritual world. And from the fact that Bacon and Amos Comenius could now perceive what Alexandrianism and Aristotelianism had become in the world, you will be able to understand the tone pervading their writings — the writings of Bacon especially, but also those of Amos Comenius.

Studied in the true and real way, history, as you see, leads us from the earth to the heavens. Account must be taken of happenings that can only be revealed in the super-sensible world. To understand Bacon of Verulam and Amos Comenius we must follow them backwards, first through the epoch when Aristotelianism was being promulgated by Scholasticism, backwards again to the encounter in the year 869 at the time of the 8th Ecumenical Council and then still further back, to the epoch when Alexandrianism and Aristotelianism were being promoted and cultivated by Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor in the form that was possible in those days. The happenings of life on the earth can only be really comprehensible when account is taken of how the super-sensible world works into the physical world.

This much I wanted to say, in order to show you that the work and influence of certain personalities on earth can only be understood by following and observing their several incarnations.

There is no time to say more about these things to-day and I will therefore bring the lecture to a brief conclusion.

As we study the progress of human civilisation it becomes apparent that through such individualities as Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor who was subsequently reborn as Amos Comenius, there creeps into the development of Christianity an element that will not merge with Christianity but inclines strongly towards Arabism. Thus in our own time we have on the one side the direct, unbroken line of Christian development and on the other, the penetration of Arabism, first and foremost in abstract science.

What I want particularly to lay on your hearts is the following: Spiritual contemplation of these two streams leads our gaze to many things which have taken place in the super-sensible world, for example to an event like that of the meeting between Alexander, Aristotle, Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor. Impulses kindled by many such events furthered the spread of true Christianity, while other events were the causes of hindrances along its path. But because in the spiritual world the Michael Impulse has taken the course I have indicated to you, there is good hope that in time to come Christianity will receive its real and true form under the sign of the Michael Impulse. For under the sign of the Michael Impulse other exchanges of thought have also taken place in the super-sensible world.

Let me add only this. Many personalities have come together in the Anthroposophical Society. They too have their karma which leads back to earlier times and appears in many different forms as we go backwards to the pre-earthly existence and then to earlier incarnations. Among those who come to the Anthroposophical Movement with real sincerity, there are only a few who were not led by their karma to participate in such happenings as I have now been describing to you. In one way or another, those who with deep sincerity feel the urge to enter the Anthroposophical Society are connected with events like the meeting of Alexander and Aristotle with Haroun al Raschid and his wise Counsellor. Something of the kind has determined the karma which then, in the present earthly life, takes the form of a longing to receive the spiritual knowledge that is cultivated in the Anthroposophical Movement.

But something else must here be added. Because of the particular form which the Michael Rulership assumes, there will be many deviations from the laws determining reincarnation in the case of those persons whose karma and connection with the Michael dominion leads them into the Anthroposophical Movement. For they will appear again at the turn of the 20th/21st century — therefore in less than a

hundred years — in order to carry to full and culminating effect what as Anthroposophists they are able to do now in the service of Michael’s dominion. The urge to be a true Anthroposophist expresses itself in the interest taken in matters of the kind of which we have been speaking — provided the interest is deep and sincere. The very understanding of these things gives rise to the impulse to return to the earth in less than a century in order to give effect to the intent and purpose of Anthroposophy.

I should like you to think deeply about the indications that have been given. In these brief words much may be found that will help you to find your true place in the Anthroposophical Movement and to feel that your membership of this Movement is deeply connected with your karma.

Cosmic Christianity: Lecture III

During the hour that has become available today I want to speak about certain things which will be easier to understand now that preparation has been made both in the general lecture-course and in the last two lectures to Members. I shall speak this evening about the karma of the Anthroposophical Society and continue this same theme in London during the next few days.

The lectures here have made it clear that in our own epoch the Impulse of the Being known in Christian terminology as the Archangel Michael is responsible for the spiritual guidance of civilised mankind. This particular Rulership — if so it may be called — of the spiritual life began in the seventies of last century and was preceded, as I said, by that of Gabriel. I shall now have something to say about certain aspects of the present Rulership of Michael.

Whenever Michael sends his impulses through the evolution of humanity in the sphere of earthly life, he is the bringer of the Sun-forces, the spiritual forces of the Sun. With this is connected the fact that during

their waking consciousness men receive these Sun-forces into their physical and etheric bodies.

The present Rulership of Michael — which began not very long ago and will last from three to four centuries — signifies that the cosmic forces of the Sun penetrate right into the physical and etheric bodies of men. And here we must ask: What kind of forces, what kind of impulses are these cosmic Sun-forces?

Michael is essentially a Sun-Spirit. He is therefore the Spirit whose task in our epoch is to bring about a deeper, more esoteric understanding of the truths of Christianity. Christ came from the Sun. Christ, the Sun-Being, dwelt on the earth in the body of Jesus and has lived since then in super-sensible communion with the world of men. But before the whole Mystery connected with Christ can reveal itself to the soul, mankind must become sufficiently mature and the necessary deepening will to a great extent have to be achieved during the present Age of Michael.

Now whenever the Sun-forces work in upon the earth they are always connected with an impulse which streams into earthly civilisation as an inpouring wave of intellectuality, for in our sphere of existence everything possessed by man and by the world in

general in the way of intellectuality, intelligence, derives from the Sun. The Sun is the source of all intellectual life operating in the service of the Spirit.

Utterance of this truth may evoke a certain inner resistance today, for men do right not to place too high a value upon intellect in its present form. Those who have any real understanding of the spiritual life will not set much store by the intellectuality prevailing in the modern age. It is abstract and formal, it crowds the human mind with ideas and concepts which are utterly remote from living reality, it is cold, dry and barren as compared with the warm, radiant life pulsing alike through the world and through man.

In respect of intelligence, however, this holds good only for the present time, since we are living in a very early period of the Michael Age and what we now possess as intelligence is still only just beginning to unfold in the general consciousness of mankind. In time to come this intelligence will have an altogether different character. In order to realise how the nature of intelligence changes during the course of human evolution, let us recall that in medieval Christian philosophy Thomas Aquinas still speaks of Beings, of “Intelligences” inhabiting the stars. As opposed to the

materialistic views prevailing today, we ourselves regard the stars as colonies of spiritual Beings

This seems strange and far-fetched to the ears of a modern man who has not the remotest inkling that when he gazes at the stars he is gazing at Beings related in certain respects with his own life and inhabiting the stars just as we ourselves inhabit the earth.

In the 13th century, Thomas Aquinas speaks of Beings in the stars although he assigns to each star a single Being in the sense that earthly humanity would be regarded as a single unit if the earth were being observed from some distant heavenly body. We ourselves know that the stars are to be conceived as colonies of Beings in the cosmos. Thomas Aquinas does not speak of specific Beings or numbers of Beings inhabiting the stars, but when he refers to the “Intelligences” of the stars this authority of medieval Christian doctrine is continuing a tradition which at that time was already dying away. This is an indication that what is comprised to-day in the term “Intelligence” was once something altogether different.

In very ancient times a man did not produce his thoughts from out of himself; when he thought about the things of the world his thoughts were not the product of his own inner activity. The faculty of thinking, man’s own activity in the forming of thoughts, has only fully unfolded since the 15th century, since the entry of the Consciousness or Spiritual Soul into the evolution of humanity. In olden, pre-Christian times it would never have occurred to men to believe that they were producing their own thoughts out of themselves; they did not feel that they themselves were forming their thoughts but rather that the thoughts were revealed to them from the things of the world. They felt: Intelligence is universal, cosmic; Intelligence is contained within the things of the world; the Intelligence-content, the Thought-content of things is perceived just as colours are perceived; the world is full of Intelligence, pervaded everywhere by Intelligence. In the course of his evolution man has acquired a drop of the Intelligence that is spread over the wide universe. Such was the conception in days of old.



And so man was conscious all the time that his thoughts were revealed to him, inspired into him. He ascribed Intelligence only to the universe, not to himself.

Now throughout the ages, the Regent of this Cosmic Intelligence which, like the light, streams over the whole world, has been the Spirit known by the name of *Michael*. Michael is the Ruler of the Cosmic Intelligence. But after the Mystery of Golgotha something of deep significance took place in that Michael’s dominion over the Cosmic Intelligence gradually fell away from him, fell from his grasp. Since the earth began, Michael has administered the Cosmic Intelligence. And in the age of Alexander, of Aristotle,

when a man was aware of thoughts, that is to say of the content of Intelligence within him, he did not regard these thoughts as his own, self-made thoughts; he felt that the thoughts were revealed to him through the Michael-Power, although in that pagan epoch this Being was known by a different name. This Thought-content gradually fell away from Michael. And if we look into the spiritual world we see that the descent of the Intelligence from the Sun to the earth is accomplished by about the 8th century A.D. In the 9th century men are already beginning, as the forerunners of those who came later, to unfold their own, personal intelligence; intelligence begins to take footing within the souls of individual men. And looking down from the Sun to the earth, Michael and his hosts could say: What we have administered through aeons of time has fallen away from us, has streamed downwards and is now to be found within the souls of men on earth.

Such was the mood and feeling prevailing in the Michael-community on the Sun. It was in the age of Alexander and for a few centuries previously that Michael had exercised his former earthly dominion. But at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, Michael and his own were in the sphere of the Sun and from there they witnessed the departure of Christ from the Sun; they did not, as those who were below, witness

His arrival among them on earth. Michael and his hosts witnessed the departure of Christ from the Sun and at the same time they saw that their dominion over the Intelligence was gradually falling from their grasp.

Thus in the periods of evolution after the Mystery of Golgotha, the course of development is as follows. Here we have the stream of spiritual, heavenly life (red) and here the stream of earthly life (yellow). Christ comes to the earth and lives henceforward in union with the earth. Until the 8th or 9th century the Intelligence is gradually sinking down to the earth (green). Men begin to ascribe what they call knowledge, what they unfold in thoughts, to their own, personal intelligence. Michael sees that what he has administered through aeons is now to be found within the souls of men on earth. And in the Michael-community it was realised: During our next rulership (— it was to begin in the last third of the 19th century —) when our impulses are again to pour through earthly civilisation, it is on the earth that we shall have to seek for the Intelligence which has descended from the heavens in order that in the hearts and in the souls of men it may be possible for us again to administer what through aeons we have administered from the Sun, from the cosmos.

 Diagram 2

And so at this time the Michael-community prepared itself to find again in the hearts of men that which had fallen from its grasp that which under the influence of the Mystery of Golgotha had also been taking the path, albeit a more gradual path, from the heavens to the earth. I will now indicate briefly how Michael and his hosts have striven in order that from this present Michael Age onwards they may once again take hold of the Intelligence that fell away from them in the heavens. Michael who has been striving from the Sun for those on earth who perceive the Spiritual in the cosmos, desires henceforward to establish his citadel in the hearts and in the souls of men on earth. This is to begin in our present age. Christianity is to be guided into a realm of deeper truths inasmuch as understanding of Christ as a Sun Being is to arise within humanity through Michael, the Sun Spirit who has always ruled over the Intelligence, who can now no longer administer it in the cosmos but desires in

future time to administer it in and through the hearts of men.

In seeking to discover the origin and source of Intelligence m whatever form it may be revealed, men turn today to the human head, because having descended from the heavens to the earth, the Intelligence weaves within the soul and is made manifest inwardly through the head. It was not always so in times when men strove for Intelligence for the essence of the Intelligence revealing itself from the Cosmos In those earlier epochs men strove for Intelligence *not* by developing the faculties of the head but by seeking for the Inspirations conveyed to them by the cosmic forces

An example of how in olden time men sought the Cosmic Intelligence in a way in which it is no longer sought today is to be found when one stands, as we were able to do last Sunday, at that place in Tintagel which was once the site of King Arthur’s Castle and where he with his twelve companions exercised a power of far-reaching significance for Europe.

From the accounts contained in historical documents it will not be easy to form a true conception of the tasks and the mission of King Arthur

and his Round Table as it is called. But this becomes possible when one stands on the actual site of the castle and gazes with the eye of spirit over the stretch of sea which an intervening cliff seems to divide into two. There, in a comparatively short time, one can perceive a wonderful interplay between the light and the air, but also between the elemental spirits living in light and air. One can see spirit-beings streaming to the earth in the rays of the Sun, one can see them mirrored in the glittering raindrops, one can see that which comes under the sway of earthly gravity appearing in the air as the denser spirit-beings of the air. Again, when the rain ceases and the rays of the Sun stream through the clear air, one perceives the elemental spirits intermingling in quite a different way. There one witnesses how the Sun works in earthly substance — and seeing it all from a place such as this, one is filled with a kind of pagan “piety” — not Christian but pagan piety, which is something altogether different. Pagan piety is a surrender of heart and feeling to the manifold spiritual beings working in the processes of nature.

Amid the conditions of modern social life it is not, generally speaking, possible for men to give effect to the processes coming to expression in the play of nature-forces. These things can be penetrated only by

Initiation-knowledge. But you must understand that every spiritual attainment is dependent upon some essential and fundamental condition.

In the example I gave this morning [Lecture X. *True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation*.] to illustrate how the knowledge of material phenomena must be furthered and extended, I spoke of the interweaving, self-harmonising karma of two human beings as a necessary factor. And in the days of King Arthur and those around him, special conditions were required in order that the spirituality so wondrously revealed and borne in by the sea might flow into their mission and their tasks.

This interplay between the sunlit air and the rippling, foam-crested waves continues to this day; over the sea and the rocky cliffs at this place, nature is still quick with spirit. But to take hold of the spirit-forces working there in nature would have been beyond the power of *one* individual alone. A group of men was necessary, one of whom felt himself as the representative of the Sun at the centre, and whose twelve companions were trained in such a way that in temperament, disposition and manner of acting, all of them together formed a twelve-fold whole — twelve individual men grouped as the Zodiacal constellations

are grouped around the Sun. Such was the Round Table: King Arthur at the centre, surrounded by the Twelve, above each of whom a Zodiacal symbol was displayed, indicating the particular cosmic influence with which he was associated. Civilising forces went out from this place to Europe. It was here that King Arthur and his Twelve Knights drew into themselves from the Sun the strength wherewith to set forth on their mighty expeditions through Europe in order to battle with the wild, demonic powers of old still dominating large masses of the population, and drive them out of men. Under the guidance and direction of King Arthur, these Twelve were battling for outer civilisation.

To understand what the Twelve felt about themselves and their mission, it must be remembered that in olden time men did not claim a personal intelligence of their own. They did not say: I form my thoughts, my Intelligence-filled thoughts, myself. They experienced Intelligence as *revealed* Intelligence, and they sought for the revelations by forming themselves into a group like the one I have described, a group of twelve or thirteen. There they imbibed the Intelligence which enabled them to give direction and definition to the impulses needed for civilisation. And they too felt that their deeds were performed in the service of the

Power known in Christian-Hebraic terminology as Michael. The whole configuration of this castle at Tintagel indicates that the Twelve under the direction of King Arthur were essentially a Michael-community, belonging to the age when Michael still administered the Cosmic Intelligence.

This was actually the community which worked longer than any other to ensure that Michael should retain his dominion over the Cosmic Intelligence. At the ruins of King Arthur's Castle today, the Akasha Chronicle still preserves the picture of the stones falling from those once mighty gates, and these falling stones become an image of the Cosmic Intelligence falling, sinking away from the hands of Michael into the minds and hearts of men.

At another place this Arthur-Michael stream has its polaric contrast: the Grail stream of which the Parsifal Legend tells. [See Rudolf Steiner, *Christ and the Spiritual World*, Leipzig, 28th December, 1913–2nd January, 1914. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1963.] This other stream comes into being at a place where a more inward form of Christianity had taken refuge. In the Grail stream too we have the Twelve around the One but account is everywhere taken of the fact that the Intelligence, the Intelligence-filled thoughts, no longer

flow as Revelations from the heavens to the earth; what has now streamed downward seems, in face of earthly thoughts, to be like the “pure fool” — Parsifal. It is realised here that the Intelligence must now be sought within the earthly sphere alone.

There in the North stands King Arthur’s castle where men still turn to the Cosmic Intelligence and where they strive to instil the Intelligence belonging to the universe into civilisation on earth. And further to the South stands that other castle, the Grail castle, where the Intelligence is no longer drawn from the heavens but where it is realised that what is wisdom before men is foolishness before God and what is wisdom before God is foolishness before men. The impulse proceeding from this other castle in the South strives to penetrate the Intelligence that is now no longer the *Cosmic* Intelligence.

And so in olden times, lasting on into the age when the Mystery of Golgotha takes place over in Asia, we find in the Arthur stream the intense striving to ensure Michael’s dominion over the Intelligence, and in the Grail stream going out from Spain, the striving in which account is taken of the fact that the Intelligence must in future be found on earth, since it no longer flows down from the heavens. The import of what I

have just described to you breathes through the whole legend of the Grail.

Study of these two streams brings to light the great problem arising from the historical situation at that time. Men are confronted with the after-workings of the Arthur-principle and the after-workings of the Grail principle. The problem is: How does Michael himself, not a human being like Parsifal, but Michael himself, find the path leading from his Arthurian knights who strive to ensure his cosmic sovereignty, to his Grail knights who strive to prepare the way for him into the hearts and minds of men in order that therein he may again take hold of the Intelligence? And now the great problem of our own age takes definition: How shall the Michael Rulership bring about a deeper understanding of Christianity? Overwhelmingly this problem confronts us, marked by the contrast of the two castles: the one of which the ruins are to be seen to this day at Tintagel, and that other castle which will not easily be seen by human eyes, since in the spiritual realm it is surrounded, as it were, by a trackless forest, sixty leagues deep on every hand. Between these two castles looms the great question: How can Michael become the giver of the impulse which will lead to a deeper understanding of the truths of Christianity?

Now it would not be correct to say that the Knights of King Arthur were not battling for Christ and the real Christ Impulse. It was simply that they bore within them the urge to seek for Christ *in the Sun* and they would not abandon their conviction that the Sun is the fount of Christianity.

Hence their feeling that they were bringing the heavens down to the earth, that their Michael-battles were being waged for Christ Who works from the rays of the Sun. Within the Grail stream the Christ Impulse takes expression in a different way. Men are conscious that the Christ Impulse, having come down to the earth, must hence-forward be carried into effect through the hearts of men. The spiritual Essence of the Sun is now united with earthly evolution — such was their conviction.

I have told you in these lectures [See Lecture 4. *True and False Paths in Spiritual Investigation*.] of individuals who in the 12th century taught and worked in the School of Chartres, where teachings still inspired by a lofty and sublime spirituality were given forth. I spoke of particular Teachers in the School of Chartres, among them Bernardus Sylvestris, Bernard of Chartres, Alanus ab Insulis — and there were others too, surrounded by a great company of pupils.

Remembering what was especially characteristic of these Teachers of Chartres, we may say: In some measure they still preserved within them the old traditions of nature teeming with life and being as opposed to an abstract, material nature. And this was why there still hovered over the School of Chartres elements of that Sun-Christianity which the heroes of Arthur's Round Table, as Knights of Michael, had striven to implant as an impulse in the world.

In a remarkable way this School of Chartres stands midway between the Arthur-principle in the North and the Grail-principle in the South. And like shadows cast by the castle of King Arthur and the castle of the Grail, the super-sensible, invisible impulses made their way, not so much into the actual content of the teachings, as into the whole attitude and mood-of-soul of the pupils who gathered with glowing enthusiasm in the "lecture halls" — as we should say nowadays — of Chartres. These were times when in the Christianity presented by these Teachers of Chartres, Christ was conceived as the sublime Sun-Spirit Who had appeared in Jesus of Nazareth. So that when these men spoke of the Christ they saw His Impulse working on in earthly evolution in the sense of the Grail-conception, and at the same time they saw in Him the down-pouring Impulse of the Sun.

What is revealed to spiritual observation as the essence, the keynote of the teachings given forth at Chartres cannot be discovered today from surviving literary texts emanating from individual Teachers in the School of Chartres. To the modern student these writings seem scarcely more than glossaries of names. But in the brief sentences interspersed between the countless designations, names, definitions, those who read with spiritual penetration will discern the deep spirituality, the profound insight still possessed by these Teachers of Chartres.

Towards the end of the 12th century they passed through the gate of death into the spiritual world. And there they came together with that other stream which was also linked with the Michael Age of ancient time but in which full account was taken of the central truth of Christianity, namely that the Christ Impulse had come down from the heavens to the earth. In the spiritual world the Teachers of Chartres came into contact with all that the Aristotelians of old had been able, as a result of the expeditions of Alexander to Asia, to achieve in preparation for Christianity. But they also came together with Aristotle and Alexander themselves who were then in the spiritual world. The impulse of which these two individualities were the bearers could not take effect on the earth at that time

because it counted upon an abandonment of the old, nature-inspired Christianity that had still been reflected in the teachings of Chartres where, as in Arthur’s Round Table, a pagan Christianity, a pre-Christian Christianity prevailed. In the days of the Teachers of Chartres it was not possible for the Aristotelians, for those who had established and promoted Alexandrianism, to be on the earth. Their time came a little later, from the 13th century onwards.

But in the intervening period something of great significance took place. When the Teachers of Chartres and those who were associated with them had passed through the gate of death into the spiritual world, they came together with souls who were preparing to descend to the physical world and who were eventually led by their karma to the Order paramountly connected with the cultivation of knowledge in the Aristotelian form: the Order of the Dominicans. The men of Chartres came together with these other souls who were preparing to descend.

Using trivial words of modern speech, I will now describe what then transpired. At the turning-point of the 12th and 13th centuries, at the beginning of the 13th century, a kind of conference took place between

the souls who had just arrived in the spiritual world and the souls who were about to descend. And the momentous agreement was reached, that Sun-Christianity as expressed, for example, in the Grail-principle and also in the teachings of Chartres, should now be united with Aristotelianism. Those who descended to earth became the founders of Scholasticism, the spiritual significance of which has never been truly assessed and in which, to begin with, men could only hope to win the day for their view of personal immortality in the Christian sense by advocating it in the most radical, extreme way. The Teachers of Chartres had laid less emphasis upon this principle of the personal immortality of man. They still inclined to the view that having passed through the gate of death the soul returns to the bosom of the Divinity. They spoke far less of personal, individual immortality than did the Dominican Schoolmen.

Many significant happenings were connected with what was here taking place. For example: When one of the Schoolmen had come down from the spiritual world to work for the spread of Christianity in an Aristotelian form, he had not, to begin with, been able fully to grasp the essential import of the Grail-principle. Karma had willed it so. And here lies the reason for the comparatively late appearance of

Wolfram von Eschenbach’s version of the Grail story. Another soul, who came down to the earth somewhat later than the first, brought with him the impulse that was necessary, and within the Dominican Order deliberations took place between an older and a younger Dominican as to how Aristotelianism might be united with the Christianity which, inspired more by nature and the workings of nature, had prevailed in King Arthur’s Round Table.

Then the time came for those individualities who had been teachers in the Dominican Order also to return to the spiritual world. And now the great agreement was reached under the leadership of Michael himself who looking down to the Intelligence that was now on the earth gathered his own around him: spiritual beings belonging to the super-sensible worlds, a great host of elemental spirits, and many, many discarnate human souls who were longing for a renewal of Christianity. It was too early, yet, for this to take effect in the physical world. But a great and mighty super-sensible School was instituted under the leadership of Michael, embracing all those souls in whom the impulses of paganism still echoed on but who were nevertheless longing for Christianity, and those souls who had already lived on the earth during the early centuries of Christendom and who bore

Christianity within them in the form it had then assumed. A Michael host gathered together in super-sensible realms, receiving in the spiritual world the teachings which had been imparted by the Michael Teachers in the old Alexander time, in the time of the Grail tradition and which had also taken effect in impulses like that going out from Arthur's Round Table.

Christian souls of every type and quality felt drawn to this Michael-community where, on the one side, deeply significant teaching was imparted concerning the ancient Mysteries and the spiritual impulses at work in olden days, while, on the other, a vista was opened into the future when' in the last third of the 19th century, Michael would again be working on earth and when all the teachings given forth in this heavenly School under Michael's own leadership in the 15th and 16th centuries, were to be carried down to the earth.

If you seek for the souls who gathered around this School of Michael at that time, preparing for the later period on earth, you will find among them very many who now feel the urge to come to the Anthroposophical Movement. Karma has so guided these souls that in the life between death and a new

birth at that time they thronged around Michael, preparing to carry down a Cosmic Christianity again to the earth.

The fact that the karma of very many of the souls who have come into the Anthroposophical Movement with real sincerity is connected with these preliminary conditions and antecedents, makes the Anthroposophical Movement into the true Michael Movement, the Movement that is predestined to bring about the renewal of Christianity. This lies in the karma of the Anthroposophical Movement. It lies, too, in the karma of many individuals who have come with sincerity into that Movement. To carry into the world the Michael Impulse which in this way can be pictured in all its concrete reality, which is betokened by many a sign on the earth today and also comes strikingly to expression in the wonderful play of nature-forces around the ruins of Arthur’s castle — this is the task of the Anthroposophical Movement in a very special sense. For in the course of the centuries the Michael Impulse must find its way into the world of men if civilisation is not to perish from the earth.

This was what I wanted to inscribe in your hearts in the lecture for which time was fortunately available today.

Cosmic Christianity: Lecture IV

We shall best understand how karma is anchored in the individual and in the evolution of humanity, and how the single facts of karma lend themselves to description, if we begin by considering how human consciousness has evolved since the time when, even in his ordinary life, man had a direct, elementary perception of his karma. To-day it is a fact that in his waking consciousness man knows nothing of his karma. The world in which he lives from awaking to falling asleep prevents him from having any direct knowledge of his karma. But humanity has not always lived in the state of consciousness that is considered normal to-day. In olden times, moreover during the earlier Post-Atlantean periods of evolution, quite different states of consciousness prevailed, even in the everyday life of man. There are three states or conditions of normal consciousness to-day — I have often described them to you. Firstly, there is waking consciousness; secondly, dream-consciousness into which scattered reminiscences of the day's experiences make their way but mingled, too, with influences from the spiritual world; and lastly, sleep-consciousness proper, in which dimness and darkness

surround the human soul and consciousness sinks away, so to speak, into unconsciousness.

Waking consciousness.

Dream consciousness.

Sleep consciousness.

It was not always thus. There was a time in man’s evolution when the experiences of his everyday consciousness took quite different forms. Let us look back some eight or ten thousand years to the epoch immediately following the Atlantean catastrophe whereby many widespread forms of civilisation and culture were wiped out of existence.

It was an epoch when land began to arise where formerly there had been sea, and sea to cover tracts that had once been land, a time moreover when the earth was destined to pass through a period of intense cold. We discover there a humanity which had survived the Atlantean catastrophe and was also endowed with three distinct kinds of consciousness but of an essentially different character from those of to-day. The prosaic, everyday consciousness of modern man in his waking hours, by which he sees other human beings and the creatures and happenings of nature in sharp outlines — this the men of those

ancient times did not possess. They saw the human being without sharp contours, extending in all directions into the Spiritual, spreading out into the aura; and in this aura they saw his soul. Animals too were seen in great and mighty auras; in their case it was the inner processes — digestion, breathing and so forth — that became visible in the aura. Plants reached up with their blossoms into a sort of cloud which permanently surrounded the Earth. Everything was bathed in a dying astral light. The day-consciousness of men who lived directly after the Atlantean Flood was a gradually fading astral vision of the physical world. I say “fading,” for in its power of giving light it was gradually waning away; before the Atlantean catastrophe this power of vision in astral light had been much stronger and more intense.

The awakening to this condition of consciousness — for the entering into it may be compared to an awakening — was very different from the awakening of normal man to-day, where the soul is confronted with chaotic dreams before passing into the waking consciousness of day. When these people of antiquity awakened it was no mere world of dreams that invaded their consciousness; they were within a world of reality of which they knew also that therein they had been among spiritual Beings of the higher

Hierarchies and elementary spirit-beings. “Waking up” was for them as it might be with a man of to-day who leaves a place in which he has had many experiences and goes somewhere else where in a sphere of new experiences he remembers the others. When in those ancient times a man entered waking life, he had the new experiences of day; but the remembrances remained with him of how he had been in another world, with other beings, not with the physical human beings who together with the plants and animals are generally around him, but with disembodied human souls living between death and a new birth, and with other beings, too, who never incarnate on the earth.

Man felt that he had departed from beings dwelling in the cosmos and was now placed into another world, into the world of physical experience between birth and death, Nevertheless he still preserved a memory of the spiritual world, the world through which human beings pass between death and a new birth. Vision of the spiritual world still streamed into his already fading astral vision. The condition of consciousness in which man to-day lives among purely physical beings did not then exist at all. In those times men had the following experience — it was not a dream but a picture that was graphic and real: when they passed into the day-consciousness and looked at trees,

animals, mountains, rocks and clouds, they felt that this was the same world in which were living those spirit-beings and human souls who were not incarnate on the earth but living in the spiritual world that is man's habitation between death and a new birth. And then there came to these men a concretely real picture of how these beings pass into the trees and rocks while man is in his waking consciousness, how they disappear into the depths of the mountains or rise up to the heights of the clouds, steal away into all the created things of outer physical nature.

On going into a forest, a man would, for example, notice a tree and know that it was the hiding place of a being with whom he had been together in the night. Men then saw clearly, as an Initiate can still see to-day, how spirit-beings made their way into physical habitations as though into their homes. No wonder that all these things passed over into the myths and that men talked of tree-spirits, water-spirits, spirits of clouds and mountains, for they saw their companions of the night disappearing into the mountains, into the waves, into the clouds, into the plants and the trees.

Such was early dawn in the experience of the soul: men saw the spirit-world disappearing into the physical world of sense. They spoke reverently of the

great and lofty Spirits as taking rest by day in these physical habitations; they spoke of the lesser, elementary beings who live among men and often among animals, as lurking in the things of nature. They expressed it even roguishly. But whether expressed in sublime and reverent language or in pleasantries, it was exactly what they felt about this condition of early dawn in the soul’s experience.

Picture it to yourselves. A human being had been in a spiritual world during the last phase of his sleep; it was when he awoke, and only then, that he clearly remembered having been in this spiritual world. How was this? Why did he only see this spiritual, super-sensible world as he awoke, when the spirits were already disappearing? Why did he only then see this spiritual, super-sensible world in which he lived between death and birth? It was because in those days, when during the last phase of his sleep man was able to see the spirit-world, he experienced yet a third condition of consciousness which conjured up another, an entirely different world before his soul. For it was so that during the time he was “asleep” in his earthly existence and present with power of vision in the spiritual world, he looked back on the evolution of his own karma.

This third state of consciousness experienced by men during the epoch immediately following the Atlantean catastrophe, consisted in a vision of karma. This vision of their own karma was an absolute reality to them.

Waking consciousness .... Fading astral vision.

Dream consciousness ..... Vision of the spiritual world.

Sleep consciousness ..... Vision of karma.

As the three states of consciousness alternate in the life of man to-day, so did ancient man experience successively the three conditions of a darkening astral vision, a vision of spiritual worlds and a vision of karma.

It is a fact that in olden times a vision of karma was a reality of consciousness for man; we can truly say that man once had a consciousness by means of which he beheld the reality of karma.

Evolution then took the following course. First of all this vision of karma ceased in the sleep that was of course no sleep as we understand it. The vision of karma began to grow dim. Of the facts of karma there only remained the knowledge possessed by the Initiates in the Mysteries. That which had once been

vision and actual experience became a matter of learning and erudition. The ancient consciousness darkened and there only remained — so it was in the old Chaldean-Babylonian-Egyptian period — the power to look up into the spiritual world. Thus, in the centuries which preceded the Christian epoch, a vision of the super-sensible world still came about quite naturally, but the facts about karma were only taught, they were no longer *seen.* In the times immediately preceding the Christian era there was still an intense consciousness of the spiritual world, of the world in which man lives between death and a new birth, although the consciousness of karma had faded and was simply not there for humanity in general when the Christian era began. It is therefore understandable that special emphasis was laid upon man’s connection with the spiritual world while he is in the disembodied state. Especially in the ancient Egyptian conception we can discern this intensely strong consciousness of the spiritual world, a purified, and clear-sighted consciousness of the world which man enters through the gate of death, when he becomes Osiris. But there is no consciousness any longer of repeated earthly lives.

Then came the gradual approach of the time which has now reached its apex and properly belongs to the

humanity of our day. Astral vision has sunk into the prosaic, matter-of-fact consciousness we have in ordinary life between awaking and falling asleep, when we only perceive, for example, that insignificant part of man which is enclosed by his skin and consists in flesh and bones and different vessels; that is all we see in our day-consciousness. One can well understand that people want to array it in all kinds of so-called beautiful clothes in an attempt to give it some importance, since deep down in the sub-consciousness there is a feeling that in itself it is of no significance and belongs, rightly, in the radiant, glowing garment of the aura, of the astral and Ego nature. And when men became aware of the change from the vision that sees the human being in his aura to the vision that sees only the unimportant, bodily part of him, they endeavoured to imitate in the clothing what had once been seen as the aura; so that the fashions of old — if I may put it so — were in a certain sense copies of the aura. As for modern fashions, well, I can assure you they are no such thing!

The consciousness of the super-sensible world has taken on the form of chaotic dreaming. Man dreams it away! And in respect of the karma-consciousness, man is fast asleep. He would have the consciousness of karma if that part of his consciousness which is

dreamless between falling asleep and awakening were suddenly to awake. Then he would have the consciousness of karma. Thus in the course of ten thousand years or thereabouts, the great change has taken place. Man “wakes” away — not only “sleeps” away — the spiritual reality in the physical world. He “wakes” away the Spiritual in nature, he “dreams” away the true spiritual world, he “sleeps” away his karma.

This development was necessary, as I have often told you, in order that the consciousness of freedom might arise. But humanity must now again emerge from its present condition of consciousness.

We have heard that what was a natural, albeit a dreamlike state of consciousness in olden times, namely knowledge of the super-sensible world and of karma, gradually grew dim and then became Mystery-teaching, while in the modern age of materialism it has been entirely lost. But in this age the possibility must again be found of building a bridge to consciousness both of the super-sensible world and of karma.

This means, in other words: When we picture to ourselves how in olden times at early dawn, the spirit-

beings with whom man lived from falling asleep to awakening hid themselves in trees and clouds, in mountains and rocks, so that in the day man could say to himself when he saw a tree or a rock or a spring: “A spirit has been enchanted into it, a spirit with whom I was together during my sleep-consciousness” — so now, by accepting the new Initiation-Science, we must learn in our present day-consciousness to recognise the spirit and as we look at every rock or tree or cloud or star, or sun or moon, to recognise the spiritual beings in all their diversity.

We must set out on the path that leads to this. We must prepare for the time when it shall be even so. As truly as a man of olden time, on awakening, saw the spirit-beings with whom he had lived during the night steal into the trees and rocks, so truly for modern man shall the spirit-beings steal forth again from tree and rock and spring!

It can really happen, and in this way. A man can lay aside the standpoint of ordinary prejudice in which he has been living, into which even children in the kindergarten are led to-day; he can put aside the prejudices that make him imagine he cannot with healthy human understanding see into the spiritual world. And when the Initiate comes and tells of things

of the spiritual world and of events that happen there, then, although he cannot yet himself see, nevertheless by making use of his unprejudiced human understanding, he can be enlightened by the communications that are given concerning the spiritual worlds. This is indeed, and under all circumstances, the right first step for each one to-day.

But difficulties are always cropping up … Last year, after one of my lectures on how to attain knowledge of the spiritual worlds, a well-meaning paragraph appeared in a newspaper of some standing. We can really call it “well-meaning” and even “respectable” as compared with many vehement expressions of opposition to Anthroposophy to-day! In this lecture I had pointed out that there is no need to become clairvoyant in order to have knowledge of the spiritual world, but that when the seer imparts the knowledge it can be received and understood by the healthy human intellect. I had emphasised this very strongly. The man who wrote the paragraph said in all good faith: “Steiner wants to apply the healthy human intellect to knowledge of the super-sensible world. But so long as the human intellect remains healthy it can certainly know nothing of a super-sensible world; as soon as it does, it is no longer healthy.” I think I have never heard it put so honestly before! For it is after all

what everyone is bound to say if he denies to the healthy human intellect a knowledge of the super-sensible world, and if he speaks in the usual way of the boundaries of knowledge. Either he must give up the present point of view, or he must agree with this assertion; no other way is really honest.

A modern Initiate can speak from clear and conscious knowledge of how from every star a spirit-being is released, of how other spirit-beings are released from plants. They come forward to meet us as soon as we pass beyond external sense-observation. Every time we go out into nature we may see all around where nature begins to be a little elemental, kobold-like elementary beings coming out of their stony shelters; if we become friendly with them, especially with the elementary beings of the mineral world, we can see behind them higher Beings who finally lead up to the First Hierarchy, to the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.

It is a fact that if the exercises given in my book *Knowledge of the Higher Worlds and its Attainment* are practised regularly with strong inner energy, selflessness and devotion, they will lead — provided we have the necessary courage — to a new power of perception. We become able to see, for instance, in

certain strata of the mountains, whole worlds of elemental beings lying hidden in rock and stone. They come forth on every side, they steal out, they grow big — and we discover that they have only been as it were rolled up and packed tight into these fragments of the elementary world. Beings are present in the mineral kingdom of nature, especially where the earth begins to grow green, and feels so fresh that we can scent its aroma and the aroma of the plants that cover it. But when we enter this sphere of elemental beings, we find that they can indeed inspire us with fear. For the beings we thus encounter are incredibly clever. We must be humble enough to say to ourselves, when we see these little dwarf-like beings emerging from the objects of nature: “How stupid man is! and how clever is this elemental world!” And because many do not like to say this in earnest, do not like even to admit that judged by spiritual perception a little new-born child is much wiser than a learned scholar, therefore these elementary beings withdraw from man’s vision. If however we can discern them, the horizon is widened and the foreground opened up to us by these clever, playful little sprites leads away into a background that reaches right up to the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.

Thus by means of the exercises to which I referred, a man whose consciousness has been made clear and quick by the study of what humanity has learned through modern natural science, can enter this world of elemental beings, and thence a higher world. If by a loving surrender to nature we thus acquire a consciousness that is not “sicklied o’er” by the authority-ridden knowledge that holds the ground to-day, we may gradually rise through Initiation-knowledge to that knowledge which humanity has lost.

And he who eventually attains the faculty to see the tree-spirits come forth from the trees — the same that the ancients saw stealing away in the dawn, and darting out again in the evening twilight — he will also be able, as he approaches a human being, to see emerge from him the figures of his earlier lives together with the evolution of his karma. For this kind of vision leads on to a vision of karma.

In the mineral world, where at first we perceive the clever, mischievous little dwarfs, the vision leads us to the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones.

In the plant world, the vision leads us to the Exusiai, Dynamis and Kyriotetes.

In the animal world (when we see emerge from the animals their own spiritual beings) we are led to a vision of the Archai, Archangels and Angels.

And in the human kingdom the vision leads to karma.

Behind the manifestations of the Seraphim, Cherubim and Thrones, behind all the other Beings of the higher Hierarchies, behind all the elemental nature-spirits who startle us by their cleverness when they dart forth from the minerals, or who come to meet us with their gentle importunities from the plant world, behind all that comes from the animals — fierce, passionate and violent as that may be at times, and also icy cold — behind all that stands here so to speak as a foreground, we face the overwhelming, the sublime manifestations of karma. For behind all the mysteries of the world there lies, in truth, the great mystery of human karma.

Having thus prepared our hearts and minds in the right way, we shall pass on in the remaining lectures to speak of particular facts of karma.

Cosmic Christianity: Lecture V

When we look back over the historical evolution of mankind and see how event follows event in the course of the ages, we are accustomed to regard these events as though we might find in more recent times the effects and results of earlier ages, as though we could speak of cause and effect in history in the same way as we do in connection with the external physical world.

We are however bound to admit that when we do look at history in this way, nearly all of it remains unexplained. We shall not, for example, succeed in explaining the Great War simply as an effect of the events that took place from the beginning of the century until the year 1914. Neither shall we succeed in explaining the French Revolution at the end of the 18th century out of the events that preceded it. Many theories of history are put forward but they do not carry us very far, and in the last resort we cannot but deem them artificial.

The truth is that the events in human history only become capable of explanation when we look at the personalities who play a decisive part in these events,

in respect of their repeated lives on earth. And it is also true that when we have given attention to this study for a considerable time, when we have observed the karma of historical personages as it shows itself in the course of their lives on earth, then and only then shall we acquire the right mood of soul to go into the matter of our own karma. Let us then to-day study karma as it shows itself in history. We will take a few historical personages who have done something or other that is known to us, and see how this deed or course of action may be traced from that which was written into their karma from their earlier incarnations.

It will in this way become clear to us that the things that happen in one epoch of history have really been brought over by human beings from earlier epochs. And as we learn to take quite seriously — it is too often considered as mere theory — all that is said about karma and repeated earth-lives, as we come to place it before us in precise and concrete detail, we shall be able to say: All of us who are sitting here have been on the earth many times before and we have brought with us into this present earth-life the fruits of earlier earth-lives.

It is only when we have learned to be quite earnest about this that we have any right to speak of the

perception of karma as something that we *know.* But the only way to learn to perceive karma is to take the ideas of karma and put them as great questions to the history of man. Then we shall no longer say: What happened in 1914 is the result of what happened in 1910, and what happened in 1910 is the result of what happened in 1900, and so on. Then we shall try instead to understand how the personalities who make their appearance in life themselves bring over from earlier epochs that which shows itself in a later one. It is only on this path that we shall arrive at a true and genuine study of history, beholding the external events against the background of human destinies.

History sets us such a number of riddles! But many a riddle is cleared up if we set about studying it in the way I have described. People appear sometimes quite suddenly in history, shooting in as it were like meteors. You examine their education and upbringing — it affords no explanation whatever. You examine the age to which they belong — again you can find no clue to the problem of their appearance in this particular time. Karmic connections alone will afford the true explanation.

I will speak of one or two such personalities who have lived in times not very far distant from our own,

and whose lives readily suggest the double question: What were their circumstances in an earlier earth-life, and what have they brought over from that earlier life that has made them as they are now?

Or again, let us take the case of personalities of an earlier age, who lived a long time ago in the history of evolution. Here we are anxious to know when they came again to earth, and what sort of people they were in a later incarnation. If in an earlier life they attained to fame and renown, we ask ourselves: What did they become when they returned? We would like to be able to add other lives to the one of which we read in history; perhaps they were historical characters a second time, or perhaps renowned in some other way: in any case we would like to know the connections.

Now connections of this kind are exceedingly difficult to investigate. Let me begin by giving you an idea of how, when we want to research into karmic connections, we have to look at the *whole* human being and not merely at what often strikes us at first sight as being particularly characteristic.

I should like here to give an example which may seem rather personal. I once had a Geometry teacher

whom I loved dearly. It was not difficult for me to love him because during my boyhood I was exceedingly fond of Geometry. But this teacher was really quite unusual. He had a peculiar talent for Geometry that fascinated me, although people who are never deeply impressed by other human beings might have thought him dry and uninteresting. Notwithstanding this somewhat prosaic nature, however, he was a man whose influence could have a strongly artistic effect upon one. I always had an intense desire to unravel the secret of this personality and I tried to apply the methods of occult research by which this end can be attained.

I spoke in Torquay, and will only now repeat in brief, of how, if one progresses in the development of the occult forces of the soul in the way I described in the lecture here a year ago [*Man as a Picture of the Living Spirit.* Rudolf Steiner Press, 1972.] and reaches the stage of empty consciousness, and if then this empty consciousness becomes filled with what resounds from the spiritual world, it is possible — if one adds to this experience such things as I spoke of in this morning's lecture — to have impressions, intuitions that are as exact as a mathematical truth and point from certain phenomena in the present life of an individual to an earlier life.

Now the wonderful way in which this teacher of mine worked in Geometry, his whole method of handling the subject, made me deeply interested in him. And this interest remained, even after his death at an advanced age. Destiny never brought me into actual contact with him again after I left the school in which he taught, but his personality stood before me in the spirit as a reality, until the day of his death and after his death; he stood there before me in particular clarity in all the detail of his bearing and actions.

Now what made it possible for me to receive out of his present life an intuition of his previous earth-life, or at any rate the previous earth-life of importance for him, was the fact that he had a club foot! One leg was shorter than the other.

When we remember that in the transition from one earth-life to another, what was head-organisation in the previous life becomes foot- or limb-organisation, and what was foot- or limb-organisation becomes head-organisation, then we shall readily understand that a bodily trait of this kind may have a certain significance, inasmuch as the life of the individual stretches across repeated earthly existences. This club foot enabled me to trace the individuality of my Geometry teacher back into the past. He was not a

man of any renown but he was a person who made upon me at any rate and upon others too, a deep and lasting impression; he had an extraordinarily strong influence upon many lives. And I was able to discover, starting from the fact of his club foot, that a study of his personality led one back to the very same place in history where one has to look for *Lord Byron.*

Now Lord Byron too had a club foot. This is an external physical characteristic, but what is external and bodily in one life is, in another, a quality of soul-and-spirit; and this characteristic led me to recognise that the two personalities who were not now contemporaries (for my Geometry teacher lived later than Byron) had, in an earlier earth-life, been together. In the modern age they had lived as poet and geometrician, each a genius in his own line, the one becoming widely famous, the other making only upon a few individuals an intimate impression which influenced the shaping of their destinies. In an earlier life, however, in medieval times, they had been side by side; together they had listened to the legend of the Palladium, the holy treasure that had once been in Troy, had then come over with Aeneas and was regarded by Rome as the talisman upon which her fortunes depended. The Emperor Constantine afterwards took it across to Constantinople and the

success and happiness of Constantinople in its history depended on this Palladium. The legend, looking prophetically into the future, went on to say that whoever acquires the Palladium, his shall be the rulership of the world.

This is not the time for me to enlarge upon the merits and content of the legend. I will only say that these two individuals who were at that time incarnated in what is to-day called Russia, undertook together, with warm enthusiasm, the journey to Constantinople in search of the Palladium. They were not able to obtain possession of it but they kept the enthusiasm alive in their hearts.

And now we can actually see how Lord Byron resolved to go in search of the Palladium in another guise when he took part in the Greek struggle for freedom. If you study carefully the life of Lord Byron, you will find that a great deal in this gifted poet is due to the fact that in an earlier earth-life he had been spurred on by enthusiasm for such an enterprise.

And again, as I look back upon my Geometry teacher with his modest, unassuming character, I can see how he owed his charm and endearing qualities in this life to the enterprise of that earlier time, although

his part, then, had been a secondary one. Had he taken an equal share in it with the individuality who became Lord Byron, he would have been a contemporary of his again in the later life.

I bring this example before you in order that you may realise that we have to look at the *whole* human being if we want to investigate karmic connections; we have even, for example, to note bodily defects or deformities. If we find that a person has some distinguishing talent of a spiritual kind in one earth-life, let us say has been a great painter, we must not draw the abstract conclusion that he was a great painter in his former earth-life. What we see on the surface are only the waves thrown up by karma which flows in deeper waters below and has to do with body, soul and spirit. We must take the whole life into the horizon of our vision.

It will frequently happen that little characteristic actions of a person, such as the way he moves his fingers, will lead the way to karmic connections far sooner than any outstanding activities he may have undertaken and that are from every other aspect of more consequence. I once had the experience of being able to arrive at deep and intimate karmic connections in the case of a certain person by giving attention to

quite an incidental peculiarity that made a strong impression upon me. He used to give lessons in a school, and on every occasion, before beginning his lesson, he took out his pocket handkerchief and blew his nose. He never by any chance began to teach without doing this. It was a deeply-rooted characteristic in him. The impression it made upon me was significant and I was able to read in it a pointer to important features of his former earth-life. It is in these signs that we have to find some significant trait in the person that will often take us back to the earlier incarnation.

And now I would like to show you how interesting from a historical point of view the question of karma becomes. Let us take a few concrete cases, for example, the case of *Swedenborg,* who appears in such a striking way in the 18th century. Last year I spoke of him in Penmaenmawr [See: Lecture 7, *The Evolution of Consciousness*. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1966.] from quite a different standpoint. I spoke then of his spiritual qualities but I did not touch upon his karma.

Swedenborg is a very remarkable figure. Until he was more than 40 years old he was a great and notable scholar, of such repute that the Swedish

Academy of Science is even now still occupied in bringing out the numerous scientific works he left behind — purely scientific works. When we know that Arrhenius, for example, has concerned himself with their publication, we shall conclude that they must be un-spiritual in the very highest degree. Otherwise Arrhenius would scarcely interest himself in them! Nobody could say that up to his fortieth year Swedenborg had anything whatever to do with spiritual matters in his knowledge and learning. Then, all of a sudden, he began — as the scientists put it — to go crazy, to give out imposing and magnificent descriptions of the spiritual world as he had seen it. It was something entirely new in Swedenborg's life, shooting in like a comet.

We ask ourselves: What can there have been in an earlier earth-life to produce such a result?

Or again, take a personality like *Voltaire.* I am choosing a few great personalities whose lives leave us with unanswered questions. Voltaire is one who may be called an absolutely incommensurable person. We are puzzled to know how this strange character, now scornful and contemptuous, now pious not to say unctuous, could grow up as a product of his age, or

again how he could have the tremendous influence he did have upon it.

With what irony does destiny work! Voltaire had a deep influence upon the King of Prussia; and this connection between Voltaire and the King of Prussia was a most significant factor in the destiny of the spiritual life of Europe. One cannot help asking: What really lies behind all this in the deeper background of history?

We may take still a third case, and One not without meaning for our own day, when many things are thrusting themselves upon our notice from the background of existence. Take the case of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, who died in the 16th century. When we follow the remarkable destiny of the Jesuit Order that he founded, we are compelled to ask the question: What kind of life had Ignatius Loyola after he passed through the gate of death? And if he has come again, what part has he played in the more recent history of mankind? There you have questions which, if they can be answered, may well throw a light upon the background of very much that has happened in history.

Intuitive vision led one back, for example, to a soul who lived in the 5th century A.D., not long after St. Augustine, and who was educated in the schools of Northern Africa, as was St. Augustine himself. In these schools, the personality of whom I am speaking became acquainted with all that proceeded from the Manichean wisdom and from the wisdom of the East which had, of course, undergone such great changes in a later age. In subsequent wanderings he came across to Spain and there absorbed what may be called early Kabbalistic doctrine, teachings which open out a vista of great cosmic relationships. Education and experience thus equipped him with an extraordinary wide outlook, and at the same time with knowledge that sprang from two main sources — one already in decadence and the other just beginning to flourish. The result was to give him in one respect a deepened life of soul, but at the same time to leave him in uncertainty and doubt.

After many travels on earth, this personality passed at length through the gate of death; and at a definite point between death and rebirth his karma brought him in touch with a particular Genius, a particular spiritual Being belonging to the world of Mars.

You know that in the period between death and a new birth a human being builds up spiritually the karma he has afterwards to bring into physical embodiment in later earth-lives. Now not only do other human souls with whom he is karmically connected share in this work with him, but the Beings, too, of the various spiritual Hierarchies. These Beings have tasks to fulfil as the result of what a human soul brings over from earlier earth-lives. And so this soul of whom I am speaking was engaged in building up his karma for the next life on earth. Now it happened that through all he had received and done, through all he had thought and felt in earlier lives, especially in the life that was particularly significant and of which I have just given you a brief sketch, he was brought very near to a spiritual Being belonging to the world of Mars. He acquired thereby a strongly aggressive nature, but on the other hand also a wonderful gift of speech; for Mars Beings prepare from out of the cosmos all that belongs to speech and language and place it into the karma of human beings. Wherever artistic skill and fluency in speech show themselves in the karma of a human being, these are to be traced to the fact that his karmic experiences have brought him into the vicinity of Mars Beings.

The individuality of whom I am speaking had been in the company of one particular Mars Being — a Being who now began to interest me intensely when I had recognised him in connection with this soul. The individuality himself appeared again on earth in the 18th century, as Voltaire. Thus Voltaire bore within him from his earlier earth-life the learning of the schools of Northern Africa and of Spain, elaborated and transformed through the fact that the shaping of his karma had taken place with the help of this particular Mars Being.

When you consider Voltaire’s great gift of language and on the other hand his instability in many things, when you consider his writings, not so much their content as his manner and habit of working, you will come to understand how it all follows quite naturally from the karmic influences I have described. And when we observe how Voltaire comes over from his earlier earth-life with his aggressiveness, his fluency of language, his power of satire, his only partially concealed lack of integrity, yet at the same time his genuine and ardent enthusiasm for truth — when we study all this in connection, first, with his former incarnation and then with his association with the Mars Being, the personality of Voltaire and still more

from an occult point of view this. Mars Being, will begin to be of great interest to us.

It was my task at one time to follow this Mars Being and through this Being certain events on earth received great illumination. We meet in history with the remarkable figure of Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus. Ignatius Loyola was, to begin with, a soldier. He was stricken with a severe illness and in the course of it was inwardly impelled to carry out all kinds of soul-exercises which were the means of filling him with such spiritual strength that he became able to set himself the task of rescuing the old Catholic Christianity from the spread of Evangelicalism. And thanks to the forces he had acquired through having a wounded leg — that is the interesting point — he succeeded in founding the Order of the Jesuits, which introduces occult exercises of the will in a most powerful manner into practical religious life. What we may think of this from other points of view is not here our concern. Ignatius Loyola, in establishing the Jesuit Order, sought to represent the cause of Jesus on earth on a grand scale, in a purely material way, through the training of the will.

Anyone who studies the remarkable life of Ignatius Loyola cannot fail to conceive a certain admiration for

it. And now if we pursue the matter further with the occult insight of Intuition, we come to something very significant.

Ignatius Loyola was the means of starting the Jesuit Order which has done more than anything else to bring Christianity right down into the earthly, material life, accompanied, however, with a strong spiritual power. The Jesuit Order has one rule which goes altogether against the grain in men of the present age but which, notwithstanding, has contributed more to its effectiveness than any other factor. Besides the usual monastic vows, besides the exercises, besides everything else that a candidate has to undergo before he can become a priest, the Order of the Jesuits has in addition this rule, namely that there shall be unconditional subjection to the command of the Pope of Rome. Whatever the Pope orders to be done, it is never asked in the Jesuit Order what opinions there may be about it. It is simply carried out because the Jesuits are convinced that higher things of the Spirit make themselves known through the Pope and that it behoves them, in unconditional obedience to Rome, to carry out the commands of this higher authority. A doubtful and precarious rule: nevertheless it implies a great selflessness that is present in Jesuitism and again signifies a tremendous increase of strength, for

everything a man does with intense energy, putting forth all his force and acting not on his own authority nor out of emotion — everything a man does in this way gives him extraordinary strength. It is a strength that moves, so to speak, in the lower clouds of material existence, but it is none the less a spiritual force. It is in truth a remarkable phenomenon.

And now, if we follow up these extraordinarily strange and imposing facts, we come to discover that the same Mars Genius who plays a part in the life of Voltaire, accompanied the life of Ignatius Loyola from the moment when he passed through the gate of death. The soul of Ignatius Loyola was perpetually under the super-sensible influence of this Mars Genius.

As soon as Ignatius Loyola had passed through death, things were immediately quite different for him than they are for other men. Other men do not at once lay aside the etheric body at death but only a few days later and have a brief retrospective vision of the past earth-life before entering upon the journey through the soul-world. In the case of Ignatius Loyola this retrospective vision lasted for a very long time. And by reason of the special kind of exercises that had been working in his soul, a close and intimate connection was able to be established between the

soul of Ignatius Loyola and the Mars Genius. For a strong and active affinity, an elective affinity so to speak, existed between this Mars Genius and all that had gone on in the soul of the sick soldier, who through the injury to his foot had been forced to take to his bed and from being a soldier had become a man who could not use his leg. All these circumstances had had a deep and powerful effect upon Loyola and when we look at the whole man it becomes clear. These circumstances led Ignatius Loyola into connection with the Mars Genius whom I had learned to know on another path of investigation. And what took shape through this connection made it possible for Ignatius Loyola to have this significant retrospect of his life which continued on and on for a long time, whereas in the ordinary way it lasts for only a few days after death. Loyola was able thereby to establish a retrospective connection as it were with those who came after him in the Jesuit Order. He remained united with his Order in the retrospect of his own life.

To this connection with its founder are due the forces that held the Order together, the forces that determined its strange and abnormal destiny and can be seen in its subjection in unquestioning obedience to the Pope — in spite of the repeal of this rule by the Pope himself — and in spite of the persecutions that

went on! But on the other hand all the things that the Jesuits themselves accomplished in the world are to be traced to the singular connection of which I have spoken.

Now this example, if we follow it further, can shed a wonderful light over certain historical events and connections. After Ignatius Loyola's death, his soul remained always in the vicinity of the earth — for one is near the earth so long as this retrospect lasts. Even if the retrospect is extended it cannot last many centuries for when it extends at all over any long period it is quite abnormal — but abnormal things do constantly occur in the great world-connections. And comparatively soon after his earth-life was over, Ignatius Loyola appeared again in the soul of Emanuel Swedenborg.

We have here arrived at a very astounding fact, but it is also extremely illuminating. Think of the light it sheds upon history! The Order of the Jesuits continues in existence … but the one who held it together up to a certain moment of time has become an entirely different person … he appears in the individuality of Emanuel Swedenborg. He became the spirit of Emanuel Swedenborg, and since that time the Jesuit Order has been guided by altogether different

impulses from those of its founder. We may frequently see in history how in the course of karma the founder of some undertaking or movement, or the persons who are deeply united with it, become separated from the movement they have founded and the movement passes over to quite other forces. So we learn how little meaning there is from a historical point of view to trace back the Jesuit Order to Ignatius Loyola. External history does so. Inner knowledge can never do so, for it sees how the individualities separate themselves from their movements.

In its external course, many a phenomenon in history is traced back to this or that founder. If, however, we come to know the later earth-life of the founder of some undertaking we may find that he has long ago separated himself from it. A great deal of what is set down as history simply loses all meaning when we are able and ready to face the occult facts that stand behind the evolution of karma.

That is one thing that emerges. The other is as follows.

The soul of Ignatius Loyola, now the soul of Swedenborg, entered an organism that had acquired its quite unusual soundness of head through the fact

of the injury to the leg from which Loyola had suffered in the former life. And this soul that had remained all the time in the vicinity of the earth, was not able, to begin with, to come down fully and completely into the new earthly incarnation. The body remained, up till the fortieth year, a remarkably healthy body with a sound and healthy brain, a healthy etheric body and a healthy astral body. With these sound and healthy organisations Swedenborg grew to be one of the greatest scholars of his time; but it was not until his early forties, when he had been through the period of the Ego-development and was entering on the development of the Spirit-Self, that he came under the influence of the Mars Genius of whom I have spoken. During the first forty years of Swedenborg's life this influence had been somewhat suppressed; but now he came directly under it and from this time on it is the *Mars Genius* that speaks through Emanuel Swedenborg, in all the spiritual knowledge he has of the universe.

And so in Swedenborg we have a man of genius, who gives us brilliant and magnificent description of the lands of the Spirits, albeit in pictures that are somewhat questionable. Thus has the mighty spiritual will of Ignatius Loyola found transformation.

It is always the case that if we follow up the real and actual karmic connections, we discover, as a rule, something that startles and astounds us. The ingenious speculations one so often hears about repeated earth-lives are ingenious speculations and nothing more. When investigation is really exact, the result is usually very startling, for the evolution of karma that moves forward from earth-life to earth-life is hidden deep, deep down below all that is experienced and lived out by man between birth and death.

I wanted to give you this example in order that you may see *how* deeply may be hidden that which flows in karma from earth-life to earth-life. You have seen it in a personality who is well known to us all. Only by investigating these hidden factors shall we arrive at the true explanations. And if you now study the life of Emanuel Swedenborg, knowing the connections of which I have told you, you will find how things become clear to you, one after another.

* * *

In the early years of this century I was several times in London. On the occasion of one of these visits I was prompted to make myself acquainted with an

extraordinarily significant personality — to begin with, simply in his writings. And as in those days there were rather longer intervals between the journeys than there are now, I obtained from the Theosophical Library the books he had written — the books that is to say, of Laurence Oliphant.

Laurence Oliphant is a remarkably interesting and significant personality: he strikes you in this way directly you begin to study his writings. These books deal with the similarities to be found in different religions, with spiritual religions, and so forth; and all of them bear evidence of a deep understanding of how in the various processes of his body and soul, man is connected with the secrets of the universe. When you read Oliphant’s writings you have the impression: Here is a picture of man in his earth-life that owes its inspiration to deep cosmic instincts. The processes of the earthly life of man that are connected with birth, embryonic life, descent and so forth, are described in such a way as to show how man, as microcosm, is wondrously rooted in the macrocosm.

Now I was very soon led in this study to a point where the figure of the dead Laurence Oliphant stood before me, but not in a form which suggested that I had here to do with the individuality as he was then

living after death; it was rather that what was contained in these writings (which may be described as setting forth a kind of cosmic physiology, a cosmic anatomy) began to come alive, began to spiritualise; and a figure appeared, not all at once entirely clear, but unquestionably there before me on many different occasions. I was able to make occult investigations into the matter and I could never do otherwise than bring the figure into connection with what came to me from reading Oliphant. It was very often there before me. At first I was often unable to satisfy myself as to what this figure wanted, what its manifestations meant. The whole manner of its appearance however, left me in no doubt whatever that it was none other than the individuality of Laurence Oliphant; and it was likewise clear to me that this figure had had a long life in the time between death and a new birth — that is to say, the birth as Laurence Oliphant — probably only broken by one earth-life that was not very significant for the rest of the world. What might not then be hidden in the personality of Laurence Oliphant! In short, this appearance of the figure of Laurence Oliphant suggested significant questions of karma.

When I entered on an investigation of the karma, a spiritual Being became manifest who is engaged in the elaboration of human karma, in the same way as

the Mars Being of whom I told you in connection with Voltaire and with Ignatius Loyola.

Now one may get to know such Genii in the most varied ways. They are especially present when it is a question of undertaking spiritual investigation into that which appears, primarily, in physical manifestation among men on earth. I was always drawn to this kind of research. My *Philosophy of Spiritual Activity* leads, as you know, to a treatment of the life of will from a cosmic standpoint. Such matters always interested me deeply. Then, again, the questions that now arise out of the tasks of the Anthroposophical Movement lead to investigations of karma — I do not say our task is exhausted in the investigation of karma for this can always only be a part of it — and the investigations of karma lead once more to Genii such as the Mars Genius of whom I have told you. These Genii are, however, also to be met with on the path of another kind of research to which I have alluded and the results of which appear in the book that Dr. Ita Wegman and myself have worked out together in the sphere of medicine. [*Fundamentals of Therapy: an Extension of the Art of Healing through Spiritual Knowledge*. Rudolf Steiner Press, 1967.] When one seeks in this way for an Initiate-knowledge of nature, one comes in a similar way to *Mercury Genii;*

these Mercury Genii approach one because they play a special part in the karma of human beings. When man is passing through the life between death and a new birth, he is first of all purged in respect of his moral qualities; this takes place under the influence of the Moon Beings. Through the Mercury Beings his illnesses are transformed into spiritual qualities. In the Mercury sphere the illnesses a man undergoes in life are transformed by the Mercury Genii into spiritual energies, spiritual qualities. That is an exceedingly important fact and one which leads further, namely to the investigation of questions of karma in matters that are in any way connected with disease.

Now the investigations which I described in Torquay led me into close contact with the spirit of *Brunetto Latini,* the teacher of Dante. When one penetrates into these spiritual worlds in the manner described, it also becomes possible to stand before individualities in the form in which they lived in a particular epoch. Thus one can stand face to face with Brunetto Latini, the great teacher of Dante in the 13th century. Brunetto Latini still possessed a knowledge whereby nature was seen, not in the abstraction of natural laws, but as under the influence of living spiritual Beings. On the way back to his native town of Florence from his post as Ambassador in Spain, Brunetto Latini heard all

kinds of reports that troubled and disturbed him, and in addition he had a slight sunstroke. In this condition and under the influence, too, of the pathological disturbances, glimpses came to him of nature in her creative work, of cosmic creation, and of the connection of man with the planetary world. What he was able to see was wonderful and sublime and no more than a shadow-picture of it subsequently found its way into the great work of Dante — the Divine Comedy.

But now if we follow this Brunetto Latini, we find that in a critical moment, when the knowledge was like to suffocate him, when it seemed to him that he might go astray from true knowledge and fall into error — in this critical moment, *Ovid* became his guide, Ovid, the Roman author of the *Metamorphoses* which contain such wonderful visions of the old Greek age, though expressed in the prosaic, characteristically Roman style.

And so we meet the individuality of Ovid together with Brunetto Latini. If we have a true grasp of the connection we can see Brunetto Latini, in the pre-Dante time, actually together with Ovid. Ovid is with him. And now, precisely in connection with the scientific, medical researches of which I was speaking,

Ovid revealed himself as Laurence Oliphant. The long life since the Ovid time, passing but once to earth again in the interval and then as a woman in an incarnation that had little significance for the world outside, came at length to this fulfilment. The content of the soul is transplanted into modern times, and Ovid appears again as Laurence Oliphant.

Nor is it Brunetto Latini alone but other personalities too of the Middle Ages who assert that Ovid was their guide. At first it sounds like a tradition that simply gets carried on. In reality, Ovid was the guide in the spiritual world for many Initiates, appearing again as Laurence Oliphant with his sublime treatment of physiology and pathology. This connection between Laurence Oliphant and Ovid is of most far-reaching import and is one of the most illuminating examples one could possibly find.

Cosmic Christianity: Lecture VI

If we look back over the evolution of mankind since the Mystery of Golgotha, we get the impression that Christianity, the Christ Impulse, has only been able to live on within the European and American civilisations in the face of definite obstacles and in association with other streams of spiritual life. And a study of the growth and gradual development of Christianity reveals many remarkable facts.

To-day I want to describe in broad outlines the growth and development of Christianity in connection with what ought to live within the Anthroposophical Society: and not only ought to, but *can* live, because those persons who feel an honest and sincere urge towards Anthroposophy, have this urge from the very depths of their being.

If we take the facts of repeated earthly lives in all seriousness, we shall say: This inner urge to get away from the conceptions and habits of thought of those among whom life, education and social relationships have placed us, this urge that we feel to enter a stream of thought which really makes claims upon our

life of soul, must have its origin in karma, in the karma coming from earlier lives on earth.

Now if we study the question of karma in connection with those personalities who find themselves together in the Anthroposophical Movement, it transpires that, without exception, before their present earthly life they have had one other important incarnation since the Mystery of Golgotha. They were already on earth once since the time of the Mystery of Golgotha and are now there for the second time since that Event.

And then the great question arises: How has the previous earthly life, with respect to the Mystery of Golgotha, worked upon these personalities who now, out of their karma, feel the urge to enter the Anthroposophical Movement?

Even from exoteric study we find that men standing as firmly within the stream of Christianity itself as St. Augustine, have said: “Christianity did not begin with Christ; there were Christians before Christ, only they were not so called.” This is what St. Augustine says.

Those who penetrate more deeply into the spiritual mysteries of human evolution and can study these spiritual mysteries with Initiation Science, will strongly confirm such a view as is expressed by St. Augustine,

for it is a fact. But it becomes necessary, then, to know in what form that which through the Mystery of Golgotha became the historical Christ Impulse upon the earth, existed in earlier times.

To-day I can speak of this earlier form of Christianity by starting from impressions which came in a place not far distant from Torquay (where our Summer Course has been held), in Tintagel, whence proceeded the spiritual stream connected with King Arthur. It was possible to receive the impressions which can still come to-day at the spot where King Arthur's castle with its Round Table stood — impressions which come above all from the magnificent natural surroundings of this castle.

At this place where nothing but ruins remain of the old citadel of King Arthur, where we look back as if in memory across the centuries that have elapsed since the Arthur stream went out from thence, we realise how stone after stone has so crumbled away that there is hardly anything to be recognised of the old castles which once were inhabited by King Arthur and those around him. But when with the eye of spirit we look out from the place where the castle once stood, over the sea with its iridescent colours and breaking waves, the impression we get is that we are able at this place

to penetrate deeply into the elemental secrets of nature and of the cosmos.

 Diagram 1

And if we look back with occult sight, if we can visualise the point of time which lies a few thousand years ago, when the Arthur stream had its beginning, then we see that those who lived on Arthur’s Mount had, as is the case with all such occult centres, chosen this spot because the impulses necessary for the tasks they had set themselves, for their mission in the world, needed the play of those forces which nature there displayed before them.

I cannot say whether it is always so, but when I saw the view there was a most wonderful play of waves surging and rippling up from the depths — in itself one of the most beautiful sights in all nature. These waves hurl themselves against the walls of rock and as they fall back again in seething foam the elementary

spirits are able to rise up from below and come to living expression. From above, the sunlight is reflected in manifold forms in the waves of the air. This interplay of elemental nature from above and from below reveals the full power of the Sun and displays it in such a way that man is able to receive it into his being. Those who can imbibe what is given by this interplay of the beings born of the light above and the beings born in the depths below, receive the power of the Sun, the impulse of the Sun. It is a moment in which man can unfold what I will call “piety” — piety in the pagan sense. Christian piety is not the same as pagan piety which means inner surrender to the gods of nature working and weaving everywhere in the play of nature.

Those who lived around King Arthur absorbed this play of weaving, working nature into their very being. And most significant of all was what they were able to receive in the first centuries after the Mystery of Golgotha.

I want to tell you to-day about the character of this spiritual life that was connected with such centres as that of King Arthur’s Round Table. And I must begin by speaking of something that is known to you all.

When a human being dies, he leaves his physical body and still has his etheric body around him for a few days. After these few days have elapsed he lays aside his etheric body and lives on then in his astral body and Ego. What happens thus to the man who has passed through the gate of death, appears to the eye of vision as if the etheric being were dissolving. After death the etheric human being expands and expands, his actual form becoming more and more indefinite as he weaves himself into the cosmos.

A remarkable phenomenon, and the exact opposite of this other, occurred in the world-historic sense when the Mystery of Golgotha took place. What was it that happened then? Up to that time Christ had been a Sun Being, had belonged to the Sun. Before the Mystery of Golgotha had come to pass, the Knights of King Arthur’s Round Table stood on these rocks, gazed at the play between the Sun-born spirits and the Earth-born spirits, and felt that the forces living in this play of nature-spirits poured into their hearts and above all through their etheric bodies. Therewith they received into themselves the Christ Impulse which was then streaming away from the Sun and was living in everything that is brought into being by the Sun-forces.

And so, before the Mystery of Golgotha, the Knights of King Arthur received into themselves the Sun-Spirit, that is to say, the Christ as He was in pre-Christian times. And they sent their messengers out into all Europe to subdue the wild savagery of the astral bodies of the peoples of Europe, to purify and to civilise, for such was their mission. We see such men as these Knights of King Arthur's Round Table starting from this point in the West of England to bear to the peoples of Europe as they were at that time, what they had received from the Sun, purifying the astral forces of the then barbarous European population — barbarous at all events in Central and Northern Europe.

Then came the Mystery of Golgotha. What happened in Asia? Over yonder in Asia, the sublime Sun Being, Who was later known as the Christ, left the Sun. This betokened a kind of death for the Christ Being. He went forth from the Sun as we human beings go forth from the earth when we die. And as a man who dies leaves his physical body behind on the earth and his etheric body which is laid aside after three days is visible to the seer, so Christ left behind Him in the Sun that which in my book *Theosophy* is called "Spirit-Man," the seventh member of the human being.

Christ died to the Sun. He died cosmically, from the Sun to the earth. He came down to the earth. From the moment of Golgotha onwards His Life-Spirit was to be seen around the earth. We ourselves leave behind at death the Life-Ether, the etheric body, the life-body. After this cosmic Death, Christ left His Spirit-Man on the Sun, and around the earth, His *Life-Spirit.* So that after the Mystery of Golgotha the earth was swathed as it were by the Life-Spirit of the Christ.

Now the connections between places are not the same in the spiritual life as they are in physical life. The Life-Spirit of the Christ was perceived in the Irish Mysteries, in the Mysteries of Hibernia; and above all by the Knights of King Arthur's Round Table. So, up to the time of the Mystery of Golgotha, the Christ Impulse belonging to the Sun actually went out from this place where the impulses were received from the Sun. Afterwards the power of the Knights diminished but they lived at the time within this Life-Spirit which encircled the earth and in which there was this constant interplay of light and air, of the Spirits in the Elements from above and from below.

Try to picture to yourselves the cliff with King Arthur's castle upon it and from above the Sun-forces playing down in the light and air, and pouring

upwards from below the elementary beings of the earth. There is a living interplay between Sun and earth.

In the centuries which followed the Mystery of Golgotha this all took place within the Life-Spirit of the Christ. So that in the play of nature between sea and rock, air and light, there was revealed, as it were in spiritual light, the Event of Golgotha.

Understand me rightly, my dear friends. If in the first five centuries of our era men looked out over the sea, and had been prepared by the exercises practised by the twelve who were around King Arthur and who were concerned above all with the Mysteries of the Zodiac, if they looked out over the sea they could see not merely the play of nature but they could begin to read a meaning in it just as one reads a book instead of merely staring at it. And as they looked and saw, here a gleam of light, there a curling wave, here the sun mirrored on a rocky cliff, there the sea dashing against the rocks, it all became a flowing, weaving picture — a truth whose meaning could be deciphered. And when they deciphered it they knew of the spiritual Fact of the Mystery of Golgotha. The Mystery of Golgotha was revealed to them because the picture was all

irradiated by the Life-Spirit of Christ presented to them by nature.

 Diagram 2

Yonder in Asia the Mystery of Golgotha had taken place and its impulse had penetrated deeply into the hearts and souls of men. We need only think of those who became the first Christians to realise what a change had come about in their souls. While all this of which I have been telling you was happening in the West, the Christ Himself, the Christ Who had come down to earth leaving His Spirit-Man on the Sun and His Life-Spirit in the atmosphere around the earth, bringing down His Ego and His Spirit-Self to the earth — the Christ was moving from East to West in the hearts of men, through Greece, Northern Africa, Italy,

Spain, across Europe. The Christ worked here in the hearts of men, while over in the West He was working through nature.

And so on the one hand we have the story of the Mystery of Golgotha, legible in the Book of Nature for those who were able to read it, working from West to East. It represented, as it were, the science of the higher graduates of King Arthur's Round Table. And on the other hand we have a stream flowing from East to West, not in wind and wave, in air and water, not over hills or in the rays of the Sun, but flowing through the blood, laying hold of the hearts of men on its course from Palestine through Greece into Italy and Spain.

The one stream flows through nature; the other through the blood and the hearts of men. These two streams flow to meet one another. The pagan stream is still working, even to-day. It bears the pre-Christian Christ, the Christ Who was proclaimed as a Sun Being by those who were Knights of the Round Table, but also by many others *before* the Mystery of Golgotha actually took place. The pre-Christian Christ was carried through the world by this stream even in the age of the Mystery of Golgotha. And a great deal of this wisdom was carried forth into the world by the stream known as that of King Arthur and the Knights

of the Round Table. It is possible, even to-day, to discover these things. There *is* a pagan Christianity, a Christianity that is not directly bound up with the actual historical Event of Golgotha.

And coming upwards to meet this stream there is the form of Christianity that is connected directly with the Mystery of Golgotha, flowing through the blood, through the hearts and souls of men. Two streams come to meet one another — the *pre-Christian* Christ stream, etherealised as it were, and the *Christian* Christ stream. The one is known, subsequently, as the Arthur stream; the other as the Grail stream. Later on they came together; they came together in Europe, above all in the spiritual world.

How can we describe this movement? The Christ Who descended through the Mystery of Golgotha drew into the hearts of men. In the hearts of men He passed from East to West, from Palestine, through Greece, across Italy and Spain. The Christianity of the Grail spread through the blood and the hearts of men. The Christ took His way from East to West.

And to meet Him from the West there came the spiritual etheric *Image* of the Christ — the Image

evoked by the Mystery of Golgotha, but still picturing the Christ of the Sun Mysteries.

Behind the scenes of world-history, sublime and wonderful events were taking place. From the West came pagan Christianity, the Arthur-Christianity, also under other names and in another form. From the East came the Christ in the hearts of men. And then the meeting takes place — the meeting between the Christ Who had Himself come down to earth and His Own Image which is brought to Him from West to East. This meeting took place in the year 869 A.D. Up to that year we have two streams, clearly distinct from one another. The one stream, more in the North, passed across Central Europe and bore the Christ as a Sun Hero, whether the name were Baldur or some other. And under the banner of Christ, the Sun Hero, the Knights of Arthur spread their culture abroad.

The other stream, rooted inwardly in the hearts of men, which later on became the Grail stream, is to be perceived more in the South, coming from the East. It bears the real Christ, Christ Himself. The other stream brings to meet it from the West a cosmic Image of the Christ. This meeting of Christ with Himself, of Christ the Brother of Humanity with Christ the Sun Hero Who is there only as it were in an Image — this meeting of

Christ with His own Image took place in the 9th century.

 Diagram 3

I have given you here, my dear friends, an idea of the inner happenings during the first centuries after the Mystery of Golgotha, when, as I have already said, the souls were living who are now again upon earth, and who have carried with them from their previous earthly lives the urge to come in sincerity into the Anthroposophical Movement. [See: *Karmic Relationships, Vol. III.*]

When we consider this significant Arthur stream from West to East, it appears to us as the stream which

brings the Impulse of the Sun into earthly civilisation. In this Arthur stream is working and weaving the Michael stream as we may call it in Christian terminology, the stream in the spiritual life of humanity in which we have been living since the end of the seventies of last century. The Ruling Power, known by the name of Gabriel, who had held sway for three or four centuries in European civilisation, was succeeded at the end of the seventies of last century by Michael. And the Rulership of Michael will last for three to four centuries, weaving and working in the spiritual life of mankind. And so we have good cause at the present time to speak of the Michael streams, for we ourselves are living once again in an Age of Michael.

We find one of these Michael streams if we look back to the period immediately preceding that of the Mystery of Golgotha, to the Arthur Impulse going out from the West, from England, an Impulse which was kindled originally by the Hibernian Mysteries. And we find a still more ancient form of this Michael stream if we look back to what happened centuries before the Mystery of Golgotha, when, taking its start from Northern Greece, in Macedonia, the international, cosmopolitan stream connected with the name of Alexander the Great arose under the influence of the

conception of the world that is known as the Aristotelian. What was achieved through Aristotle and Alexander in that pre-Christian age took place under the Rulership of Michael, just as now once again we are living under his Rulership. The Michael Impulse was there in the spiritual life at the time of Alexander the Great, just as it is there now, in our own time. Whenever a Michael Impulse is at work in humanity upon the earth it is always a time when that which has been founded in a centre of spiritual culture spreads abroad among many peoples of the earth and is carried into many regions, wherever it is possible to carry it.

This came to pass in pre-Christian times through the campaigns of Alexander. The achievements of Greek culture were spread among men wherever this became possible. If one had asked Alexander and Aristotle: Whence comes your impulse to spread abroad the spiritual culture of your age? — they would have spoken, though under a different name, of that same Being, Michael, who works from the Sun as the Servant of Christ. For among the Archangels who in turn rule over civilisation, Michael belongs to the Sun. Michael was Ruler in the time of Alexander and is Ruler again in our own time. The next Ruling Archangel was Oriphiel, who belongs to Saturn. His

successor, the Archangel Anael, belongs to Venus. While Zachariel, the Archangel who ruled civilisation in the 4th and 5th centuries, belongs to the sphere of Jupiter. Then came Raphael, from the Mercury sphere, at the time when a form of thought connected with medicine and healing lived in the background of European civilisation. After Raphael came Samael, whose Rulership extended a little beyond the 12th century. And then came the Age of Gabriel. Samael belongs to Mars, Gabriel to the Moon. And Gabriel was once again succeeded by Michael, who belongs to the Sun sphere, in the seventies of the 19th century. Thus in rhythmic succession these seven Beings of the Hierarchy of the Archangels rule over the spiritual life of the earth.

And so as we look back — when was the last Rulership of Michael? It was in the Alexander period. It prevailed during that period when Greek civilisation was carried across to Asia and Africa, and finally concentrated in the great and influential city of Alexandria with its mighty heroes of the spiritual life.

It is a strange vista that presents itself to occult sight. In the age which lies a few centuries before the Mystery of Golgotha, we see, going Eastwards from Macedonia — that is to say, once more from West to

East but this time farther to the East — we see the same stream which proceeds from the English and Irish souls in the West and which also flows from West to East. During the Alexander period, Michael was the Ruling Archangel on the earth. During the Arthur period, when Michael was working from the Sun, the influences I have described were sent down from the Sun. But what happened later on, after the Mystery of Golgotha had taken place? What happened to the kind of thought that had been carried by Alexander the Great over to Asia?

At the time when Charlemagne, in his own way, was establishing a certain form of Christian culture in Europe, Haroun al Raschid was living over yonder in Asia Minor. All the oriental wisdom and spirituality to be found at that time in architecture, in art, in science, in religion, in literature, in poetry — it was all gathered at the Court of Haroun al Raschid. And at his side there was a Counsellor, a man who was not initiated in all these arts and sciences at that time, but who had been an Initiate in earlier times, in a former life. Around these two men, Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor, we find that all the wisdom which had been carried by Alexander into Asia, all the teachings which had been drawn from the old nature-wisdom and were imparted by Aristotle to those he was able to

instruct — all this was changed. Alexandrianism and Aristotelianism were permeated and impregnated at the Court of Haroun al Raschid with Arabism, with Mohammedanism.

And then, all the learning thus permeated with Arabism was carried over into the stream of Christianity by way of Greece, but especially by way of Northern Africa, Italy and Spain. It was carried over, inculcated as it were into the world of Christendom.

But before this, Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor had passed through the gate of death, and from that life which leads from death to a new birth they looked down on what was taking place on earth in the expeditions of the Mohammedan Moors to Spain. From the spiritual world they watched the form of culture which they themselves had promoted and which had been spread by their successors. Haroun al Raschid concentrated his attention from the spiritual world more on the regions of Greece, Italy and Spain; his Counsellor more on the stream going out from the East across the regions to the North of the Black Sea, through Russia and into Central Europe.

And now the question arises: What was the destiny of Alexander and Aristotle themselves? They were

deeply bound up with the Rulership of Michael but they were not incarnated on the earth at the time of the Mystery of Golgotha.

We must try to get a clear conception of the two contrasting pictures. On the earth are those who were contemporaries of the Mystery of Golgotha. Christ comes down through the Mystery of Golgotha, becomes Man, and from then on lives in the earth-sphere. And what is happening on the Sun? On the Sun there are the souls who at that time belonged to Michael, who were living in his sphere. These souls witnessed, from the Sun, the departure of Christ from the Sun and His descent to earth. On the earth there were those who witnessed His arrival. That is the difference. The experience of those who were on earth during the Michael Rulership at the time of Alexander, was that they saw as it were the *other* direction of the Christ Event, namely, the departure of the Christ from the Sun. They live on — I will not now mention unimportant incarnations — and they experience, in the spiritual world, that significant point of time in the 9th century, about the year 869, when there took place the meeting of the Christ with His own Image, with His own Life-Spirit brought over from pagan, pre-Christian Christianity.

Another meeting also took place in the spiritual world, a meeting of the individualities living in Alexander the Great and in Aristotle with the individualities who had lived in Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor. The wisdom from Asia, in a Mohammedanised form, living in Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor after their death, came into contact, in the spiritual world, with Alexander and Aristotle. On the one side Aristotelianism and Alexandrianism, but impregnated with Mohammedanism, and on the other, the real Aristotle and the real Alexander — not a weakened form of their teachings. Alexander and Aristotle had witnessed the Mystery of Golgotha *from the Sun.*

Then a great spiritual exchange, a great heavenly Council, if one may call it so, took place in the spiritual world between Mohammedanised Aristotelianism and Christianised Aristotelianism which had, however, been imbued in the spiritual world with the Christian Impulse.

In the spiritual world which borders on our physical earth — it was here that Alexander and Aristotle met with Haroun al Raschid and his Counsellor and consulted together as to the further progress of Christianity in Europe, with an eye to what should

come at the end of the 19th century and in the 20th century, when Michael would again have the Rulership on earth. This all took place in the light raying from that other event, namely, the meeting of Christ with His own Image. That heavenly Council was permeated by the influence of this meeting. And the lines, the threads of the spiritual life of humanity were projected with great intensity in the spiritual world which borders on the physical earth.

Below, on the earth itself, the Church Fathers gathered together in Constantinople at the Eighth Ecumenical Council, where they formulated the dogma that man does not consist of body, soul and Spirit, but only of body and soul, the soul possessing certain spiritual attributes. Trichotomy — the definition of man as body, soul and Spirit — was done away with and anyone who persisted in believing it was declared to be a heretic. The Christian Fathers in Europe never spoke of body, soul and Spirit, but only of body and soul.

The decisive event which took place in the year 869 in the super-sensible worlds as I have described it, cast its shadows down into the earthly world. The Dark Age, the Kali Yuga, received a special impetus, while

what I have just described was taking place above, in the spiritual world.

Such was the real course of events. In the physical world the Council of Constantinople which eliminated the Spirit, and in the world immediately bordering on the physical, a heavenly Council such as I have described — coinciding with the meeting of Christ Himself with His own Image.

But it was known that it was a question of waiting until the new Michael Age had dawned on earth. There were, none the less, always a few Teachers who knew, even though in a somewhat decadent way, something of what takes place behind the veils of existence. There were always Teachers who knew how to present, if not always in very apt pictures, the spiritual content of the world, who could speak of what was happening in the spiritual world that is so near to the earth. And here and there these Teachers found ears willing to listen to them. Their listeners were men who learned something of true Christianity by catching here and there fragmentary words as to what would come in the 20th century after the Michael Rulership had begun once again.

In you yourselves, my dear friends, are the souls who were in incarnation at that time and listened to those who spoke of the coming Age of Michael and whose speech was influenced by impulses coming down from the heavenly Council of which I have told you.

From these experiences of a previous life in the early Christian centuries — not precisely the 9th century but before and after, chiefly before — arose the subconscious urge, when the Michael Rulership should be there once more, from the end of the 19th century onwards, to look for centres where the spiritual life is again cultivated under the influence of Michael. This impulse was rooted in the souls of those who had once heard of the teachings, who knew something of the mysteries of which we have spoken to-day.

And so the karmic urge lives in souls to find their way to that form of Christianity which was to be spread by Anthroposophy under the influence of Michael at the end of the 19th and beginning of the 20th centuries. What these souls had experienced in earlier times expresses itself in this incarnation in the fact that certain of them find their way to the Anthroposophical Movement.

Knowledge resulting from a converging of old pre-Christian, cosmic Christianity with inward Christian doctrines, teachings which were connected with the spiritual workings of nature and yet also with the Mystery of Golgotha, continued to be taught on earth at the time when those souls who now in this later incarnation feel themselves drawn to Anthroposophy had passed through the gates of death and were living in the spiritual world between death and a new birth. Some of them indeed came down to incarnation on the earth. The ancient teachings, with their cosmic view of Christianity, lived on, propagating traditions of the Mysteries of antiquity. This knowledge lived on in Schools in Europe like that of Chartres in the 12th century, with its great Teachers — Bernardus Sylvestris, Alanus ab Insulis and others. And the teachings lived and worked too in the great teacher of Dante, Brunetto Latini, of whom I spoke to you in the last lecture. In this way we see how there is a continuation of the knowledge in which there was still connection between cosmic Christianity and the purely human, earthly Christianity which more and more gained the supremacy on earth.

The Council held in Constantinople was an earthly, shadow-image of something that took place in the spiritual world. A constant connection was maintained

between what was proceeding in the physical world and in the immediately adjacent spiritual world. And because of this, the most illustrious Teachers of Chartres felt themselves inspired by the true Alexander and the true Aristotle, although in a still stronger way by Plato and by the Platonic and Neo-Platonic thought which prevailed in the mysticism of the Middle Ages.

Something of great significance now took place. Those who had grouped themselves around Michael, and who had for the most part been incarnated at the time of Alexander, were now living in the spiritual world. Looking down from thence they saw how Christianity was evolving under the Teachers of Chartres. But they waited until these Teachers — who were the last who taught of Christianity in its cosmic aspect — they waited until these Teachers of Chartres had come up into the spiritual world. And at a certain point of time, at the end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th centuries, there gathered together in the spiritual sphere bordering on cur earth, the more definitely Platonic Teachers of Chartres and those who had in some way taken part in the heavenly Council in the year 869. There took place — if I may use trivial words of earth to describe such a sublime event — a kind of conference between the Teachers of Chartres

who had just ascended into the spiritual world and were now to continue their existence there, and those who were on the point of descending to earth, among them the individualities of Alexander and Aristotle, who immediately afterwards incarnated in the Dominican Order. And then, in a body of teaching that is so misunderstood to-day but the deep significance of which ought to be realised, in Scholasticism, preparation was made for all that was to come later on in the next Age of Michael.

And now, in order that they might enter right into the heart of Christianity, the souls who belonged to the sphere of Michael, who had lived in the old Alexander time, who had not lived on earth during the first Christian centuries, or at least only in unimportant incarnations — these souls now came into incarnation in order to imbibe Christianity in the Dominican or other Orders, but mainly in the Dominican Order. Again they passed through the gate of death and continued their existence in the spiritual world.

In the 15th century and lasting on into the 16th — and it must be remembered that time-relationships are quite different in the spiritual world — there took place in the super-sensible world the great process of

instruction instituted by Michael himself for those who belonged to him. A great super-sensible School was founded, a School in which Michael himself was the Teacher and in which those souls took part who had been inspired by the impulses of the Alexander Age and had later steeped themselves in Christianity in the manner described. All the discarnate souls who belonged to Michael took part in this great School in the super-sensible world during the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. All the Beings of the Hierarchy of Angels, Archangels and Archai who belonged to the Michael stream, as well as many elementary beings, also took part in it.

In this super-sensible School, a wonderful review was given of the wisdom of the ancient Mysteries. Detailed knowledge in regard to the ancient Mysteries was imparted to the souls partaking in this School. They looked back to the Sun Mysteries, to the Mysteries of the other planets. But a vista of the future was given too, a vista of what should begin at the end of the 19th century in the new Age of Michael. All this passed through these souls who now, in the present Michael Age, feel drawn to the Anthroposophical Movement.

Meanwhile, on earth, the last bout of the struggle was taking place. Haroun al Raschid had incarnated again as Lord Bacon of Verulam and in this new incarnation had set the impulse of materialism on foot. The universality in the teachings of Bacon, but also his materialism, came from his incarnation as Haroun al Raschid. Bacon was the reincarnated Haroun al Raschid. The Counsellor, who had taken the other path, incarnated in the same epoch, as Amos Comenius.

And so while Christianity illumined by Aristotelian and Alexandrian thought was going through its most important phase of development in the super-sensible worlds during the 14th, 15th, 16th and 17th centuries — during this very same period we find materialism being established on earth in the minds of men, established in science by Bacon, the reincarnated Haroun al Raschid, and in the realm of education by Amos Comenius, the reincarnated Counsellor of Haroun al Raschid. The two souls worked together.

When Amos Comenius and Bacon had once again passed through the gate of death, a remarkable thing came to pass in the spiritual world. After Bacon had passed through the gate of death, it happened that because of the particular mode of thinking he had

adopted in his incarnation as Bacon, a whole world of “idols,” demonic idols, went forth from his etheric body, and spread themselves out in the spiritual world which was peopled by those who were the pupils of Michael.

As I have shown in my first Mystery Play, things that happen on earth work powerfully into the spiritual world. Bacon’s mode of thinking on the earth worked so shatteringly into the spiritual world that it was flooded by a whole host of “idols.”

And the materialistic form of educational science inaugurated by Amos Comenius provided the sphere, the cosmic atmosphere, as it were, for the idols of Bacon. Bacon provided the idols; and just as we human beings have around us the mineral and plant kingdoms, so these idols of Bacon were surrounded by other kingdoms which were necessary to their existence. And these were provided by what Amos Comenius had instituted on earth.

The individualities who had once lived on the earth as Alexander and Aristotle set themselves to fight these demonic idols. And the conflict continued until the time when the French Revolution broke out on the earth.

The idols, the demonic idols which it had not been possible to overcome, which had as it were escaped from the fight, descended to earth and became the inspiring forces of the materialism of the 19th century with its many consequences. These forces are the inspirers of the materialism of the 19th century.

The souls who had remained behind, who with the assistance of the individualities of Aristotle and Alexander had profited by the teaching of Michael, came back to earth, bearing the impulses I have described, towards the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th. And many of these souls can be recognised in those who come to the Anthroposophical Movement. Such is the karma of those who come to the Movement with inner sincerity.

It is a shattering experience to hear of what is happening immediately behind the events in the outer world at the present time. But it is something which, under the impulse of the Christmas Foundation at the Goetheanum must be implanted in the hearts and souls of those who call themselves Anthroposophists. It must live in their hearts and souls, and it will give them the strength to work on, for those who are Anthroposophists to-day in the true sense will feel a strong urge to come down again to the earth very

soon. And with a faculty of prophecy connected with the Michael Impulse, it can be foreseen that many anthroposophical souls will come again to the earth at the end of the 20th century in order to bring to full realisation the Anthroposophical Movement which must now be established on a firm and sure foundation.

Every Anthroposophist should be moved by this knowledge: “I have in me the impulse of Anthroposophy. I recognise it as the Michael Impulse. I wait and am strengthened in my waiting by true activity in Anthroposophy at the present time in order that after the short interval allotted in the 20th century to anthroposophical souls between death and a new birth, I may come again at the end of the century to promote the Movement with much more spiritual power. I am preparing for the new Age leading from the 20th into the 21st century” … It is thus that a true Anthroposophist speaks. Many forces of destruction are at work upon the earth! All culture, all civilised life must fall into decadence if the spirituality of the Michael Impulse does not so lay hold of men that they are capable of bringing upliftment to the civilisation that is hurrying downhill.

If there are to be found truly anthroposophical souls, willing to bring this spirituality into earthly life, then there will be a movement leading upwards. If such souls are *not* found, decadence will continue to spread. The great War, with all its attendant evils, will be merely the beginning of still worse evils.

Human beings to-day are facing a great crisis. Either they must see civilisation going down into the abyss, or they must raise it by spirituality and promote it in the sense of the Michael Impulse.

That, my dear friends, is what I had to say to you on this occasion and my desire is that it shall work on and bear fruit in your souls. For as I have often said at the conclusion of a happy and satisfying visit, when we have worked together for a time, we know, as Anthroposophists, that it is our karma to have been able to do so. We know too that we still remain united, even when divided in physical space. We shall remain united in the signs that can reveal themselves to the eyes of spirit and to the ears of soul if what I have said in these lectures has been received in full earnestness and has been understood.